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SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY G. ARTHUR PEARSON (OF PEARSON'S WEEKLY)

No. 486. FOR WEEK ENDING APRIL 23RD, 1898. [ONE PENNY.

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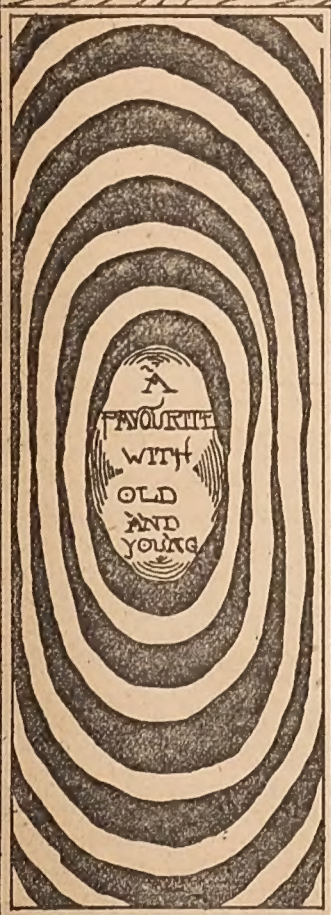
SHORT STORIES

EDITED BY C. ARTHUR PEARSON



No. 486.] [ONE PENNY.

For the Week ending April 23rd, 1898.

ONLY A HYDRO FRIENDSHIP.

HARRY MELVILLE'S first opinion of English girls was not very flattering. He said they were either too familiar or to stand-offish. They either giggled and simpered and flirted, or else they were guarded and distant. He liked a girl who could be jolly and natural, and he said, for these qualities, there were none to equal the Australian girls.

He had come over on a pleasure trip, and, after staying a month in London, went to a Hydropathic Establishment in Yorkshire by way of a change.

It was the holiday season, and the place was very full of visitors, dancing and festivities being the order of the hour. The first evening he kept to himself and took stock generally.

He was a bit of a philosopher in his way, and fond of watching his fellow-creatures from his own standpoint, and drawing certain conclusions and theories from what he saw. And as he had lived thirty-six years, he had sifted the human race pretty thoroughly, and flattered himself that he understood it, and could generally read his companions like a book.

When dinner was over, he went at once to the billiard room, and settled himself in one of the most comfortable easy chairs with his pipe, and lazily "took in" the men of the house.

There was, of course, the usual collection one meets at these gatherings, but this was Harry Melville's first

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experience of an English Hydro, and he was rather interested. He noted the two or three frivolous young men who made perpetual efforts to be funny; the middle-aged ones who were more impressed with their own importance than anything else in the world; the old ones who thought all the young ones foolish; and the bores who talked incessantly of their gout and their doctor's directions. He was not particularly impressed with anyone, but he liked best a trio of young men who had evidently come to have a spree and made no secret of it.

They were seated on a window-ledge, swinging their feet just before him, and now and then one or other convulsed his two companions by a lively sally. Harry could not help smiling secretly himself, for their laughter had such a genuine ring in it, and their high spirits were so palpable, that he found them infectious.

They did not appear disposed to bother their heads about any of the other men, but passed remarks on the players and audience, which were certainly humourous, if not flattering.

Presently he heard one of them remark:

"Let's go to the drawing-room."

"What! getting impatient already," said another. "My dear fellow, it isn't ten minutes since you parted!"

"It's a lifetime," said the first speaker, with a deep-drawn sigh, "and then she only looked at me across a sea of serviettes and glasses, half round a mulberry bush."

"Rats, man! she was looking at me," said the third man. "I caught her eye under the lower branch."

"That was the other eye," said the second speaker, "Chip was gazing into the left orb."

"Well, let's go and see who she looks at now," said the one designated Chip. "She's sure to be in the winter garden, and it'll soon be time to dance," whereupon they all three got up and sauntered away.

At their respective offices they were known as Tom Walton, Frank Deed, and Philip James, but to each other they were Chum and Chappie and Chip.

Chum was the eldest, and sometimes he endeavoured to keep the others in order, but his success was not striking. Chip was the youngest, and he was very boyish. His fund of spirits was unlimited, and he was everybody's favourite. Chappie was the best-looking and the lady's man. He was always in love with somebody, but as he fell out as easily as he fell in, his two friends never thought anything of it. However, he was always the first to discover all about the fair ladies of the Hydro, and before dinner was half over the first night he was lost in admiration of a merry blue-eyed girl at an opposite table.

His subsequent behaviour had been a source of great amusement to the other two, who had promptly made a point of requiring his attention every time the blue eyes looked their way.

Moreover, Chip was absolutely certain she only looked at him, while Chum declared he had had an actual smile all to himself.

Harry Melville watched them go, then he dragged himself up and prepared to follow.

He was a very tall man, and as he drew himself to his full height, and stood astride on the hearth, many curious eyes glanced at him. He had the colonial air of careless indifference about him, and rather the appearance of a distinguished stranger. His complexion was very dark, and his eyes bright and penetrating like a bird's, while he had a habit of half closing them, while watching anything closely.

"Have a fifty up?" asked one of the frivolous young men, rather familiarly.

"Thank you, no," replied Melville coolly, and took a long whiff at his cigar; then he sauntered to the door.

In the hall he stood on the doorstep, and looked out into the night.

When he sauntered into the ball-room twenty minutes later, after a passing glance into the drawing-room, he first of all looked round for the trio. He was amused to find them all three, lolling in various postures, about the owner of the blue eyes, who was leaning back in a large armchair, looking considerably amused.

She had evidently been dancing with one of the three, but was nothing loth to do the sitting out with the whole trio.

Melville took a seat near the group, and, as usual, indulged in a little quiet observation.

"My programme for to morrow," he heard her say, "is golf, 10.0 to 1.0; lunch, 1.30; cycling 2.30 to 4.30, frivolling, 4.30 to 5.30; then dress, then dinner, then dance, then sleep."

"What energy!" gasped Chappie.

"Sounds like an automatic machine," said Chip. "Do you permit anyone to follow you through the programme?"

"Oh, dear no! No followers allowed," and she laughed merrily.

"Oh, come," said Chum, "you must at least let us watch the golf."

"Well, I'll perhaps consider it. I'm going to hunt up my brother now; he's been in the smoke-room quite long enough, and he ought to come and dance. Can I get any of you any partners?"

"Thanks awfully. I should like to be introduced to that girl in black," said Chum.

"Come along, then," and she led the way. As she passed Melville's chair, she glanced at him casually, while still talking to her companion.

The indifference of her glance pleased him. She evidently was no more interested in him than the rest of the community, in spite of his prepossessing appearance, and while it did not flatter his vanity, it pleased his taste.

"No followers allowed," he repeated to himself, with inward amusement, and turned his head to watch the dancers.

He could not see them very well, so he changed his seat to one in a dim corner of the winter garden, which had just been vacated by another tall dark man. He had his back to a side entrance, and presently he heard the door swung open, and the ringing voice he was already familiar with, say: "He can't be in here."

"Yes, in that corner, I saw him five minutes ago," said another voice. "See, there he is."

Immediately the door swung to, a quick footstep sounded behind him, and before he had time to turn, a pair of cool, soft hands, were over his eyes and a voice said:

"Who is it, you bad boy? I've been hunting for you everywhere. How dare you be so lazy!"

"Allow me," he remarked politely, and the hands were suddenly withdrawn, with an exclamation of horror.

"Goodness!" she gasped, and then began to laugh.

"I thought you were my brother," she said. "I'm so sorry. He was sitting here a moment ago, and you looked exactly like him. Whatever will you think of me?"

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"Nothing very dreadful, I can assure you," he replied in his slightly drawling fashion. "Perhaps I can understudy your brother still further."

"I was going to fetch him to dance," she said, in her straight way.

Melville was, as a rule, too lazy to dance, but he thought he should like to have a turn with her, because she reminded him of the Australian girls, so he got up at once.

"I think I can manage that part of the programme," he said.

"Yes, do. Come along. I'll introduce you to a very good dancer."

"But I thought you were to be the partner?"

"I? Oh, I'm engaged for the next two," and without giving him a chance to remonstrate, she walked him off to another young lady.

Melville felt victimised, and was very disgusted, but he was too true a gentleman to show it. However, he did not risk any further encounters, but went off to the smoke-room, where he was joined at a late hour by the trio. They appeared to be in higher spirits than ever, and began talking everybody over. Most of their remarks were more candid than flattering, but it was very evident one fair lady was in high favour.

"I call her A 1," said Chip, taking a deliberate aim at a bronze ornament with a penwiper.

"Well you needn't throw the furniture about if she is," replied Chum.

"The latest fashion in emphasising" was the laughing reply; "didn't you know a fashionable preacher threw his glass of water at the congregation the other day, to impress his remarks?"

"Ask old Chappie what he thinks about her. I say, Chappie, you've got it pretty badly this time, I believe," and his blue eyes sparkled mischievously. "Better try Beecham's Pills at once. They're for all ills, and prevention is better than cure."

"Chuck it!" ejaculated Chappie; and sank further down into his roomy armchair.

"What! is it as bad as all that?" continued the incorrigible Chip. "Well, I admire your taste, if that's any consolation. I'm a bit hard hit myself, and old Chum hasn't got off scot free."

"I like that little girl in black," remarked Chum.

"So do I," answered Chip, "but, at the same time, we all know she isn't a patch on Miss Willard. I say, Chappie, old boy, cheer up! I saw her admiring your back hair."

"I expect she discovered how thin it was getting," said Chappie, from the depths of the chair.

"Then I've no doubt she'd think you wanted someone to look after you. Never say die; you'll be all right in a day or two, and Chum and I will help you through the wedding."

At this point Melville got up and stretched himself, and Chip immediately offered him a cigarette. He took it and afterwards came down from his pedestal and joined in their conversation.

The following morning he arrived downstairs early and sauntered into the billiard-room.

He was rather surprised to hear the balls going, and still more so when he found one of the players was Miss Willard, the heroine of the previous evening's conversation and his own little adventure.

She greeted him frankly across the table and then ran up a break of sixteen. He offered himself as marker and was astonished at her skill. He was also particularly struck by the quiet, matter-of-fact way in which she played, and her power of thorough concentration upon the matter she happened to have in hand.

Just as the game concluded the trio strolled in, and in two minutes she was sitting in a window seat with them, entertaining them hugely and being hugely entertained in return.

He watched them lazily, and came to the conclusion that one of the three meant winning her, but he was undecided which. He thought Chip was too young, Chum not quite smart enough, and Chappie a bit too dandified. However, the idea amused him, so he mentally backed Chip, and prepared to get three days' good entertainment out of them.

He did not see much of them during the day, but, in the interval between tea and dinner, he discovered them all four in the winter garden, amusing themselves with tricks. He wondered if any of the trio had managed to dispense with the other two yet, and how it was the three butterflies still kept to the same flower.

Later on he asked her to dance and was well pleased with her performance.

"Once more you remind me of the Australian girls," he said calmly; "they are beautiful dancers."

She looked up at him frankly.

"How else do I remind you of them?" she asked.

"Oh, in various ways."

"For instance?"

"You are very lively and fresh and free."

"Are Australian girls always like that?"

"Very nearly. They don't meet troubles half way. They enjoy life."

"Ah!" and she paused.

Suddenly she turned to him.

"Do Australian men generally amuse themselves by taking stock of their fellow-creatures all day long?"

"Is that meant for a rebuke?"

"Not exactly, but you rather amuse me by doing nothing but look on, and measure the rest of us."

"Human nature is the most interesting study of all."

"Yes? Are you proficient at it?"

"I think so. I have made it a speciality."

"Tell me something about myself. Anything you like; I won't be offended."

"You are very light-hearted."

She smiled a little.

"Is that because I laugh?" she questioned.

"It is the sound of your laugh chiefly."

"Yes, go on."

"Perhaps you would rather I didn't. I never flatter."

"I don't mind. I prefer candour infinitely."

"Well, then, you are rather thoughtless and perhaps a little hasty. A little down on other people who do not reach your standard. You have not had much trouble, therefore you are not a very good sympathiser."

A strange expression flitted across her eyes, but she only said: "How interesting. Tell me some more to-morrow. I must go for the next dance now."

He watched her, and somehow, a new sensation of distrust crossed his mind, but he thrust it aside and went back to the smoke-room.

The next day he observed with interest that Chip was gaining ground and Chappie growing despondent.

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Chum had evidentally given up and wisely transferred his attentions to the little dark girl. Miss Willard, he observed, played tennis with Chip all the morning and afterwards sat in a shady arbour with him. They seemed so happy together that he believed his money was as good as won, and he wondered if she would find time to continue their interrupted conversation again.

In the afternoon a char-a-banc drive was arranged, and, on the return journey, a mere coincidence placed him beside her. She talked to him of many things in her usual bright fashion, and made him tell her a lot about Australia. Her depth of thought and insight surprised him, and he felt still further persuaded that Chip was too young and frivolous for her.

The latter came to help her down at the door, and acted with a certain air of possession, which she did not appear to resent, and Melville half-decided it was a foregone conclusion.

Before she vanished, however, she turned to him again, and said with a bright smile. "You will be able to tell me a lot more to-night Mr. Melville, as you know me still better now. I am quite looking forward to it."

He stood still and watched her walk away feeling a little puzzled.

Did he know her, or did he not?

Anyhow he was sorry she had taken to Chip, for he felt convinced they were unsuited to each other. He was sorry she had gone off with him, too, for there was no one else he cared to talk to much, and somehow he always felt more contented when she was near.

He was glad when the time came for their conversation, and as they strolled out on to the terrace together, he regarded her with quiet criticism.

She was looking extremely well, and as bright and merry as ever. There was a little change about her mouth however, only he did not see it.

"I feel as if you were my father confessor," she said, laughing. "I wonder what you are going to tell me to-night, about my sins and shortcomings."

He smiled, too.

"That isn't a fair way to put it," he said. "You know you asked me."

"Of course I did, and I am most interested. I want you to tell me exactly what you think. You finished last night by saying I had not had much trouble. Suppose you define that a little more clearly. What sort of a life do you think I have led?"

"A very sunny, happy one," he answered at once. "There has been little enough in it to keep you awake at nights. I do not mean that you are frivolous, only gay and happy. I think if trouble came you would face it bravely and fearlessly."

"Do you think I could hide it?" she asked, looking across the garden.

"I doubt it. You have such high spirits, that anything to damp them would be bound to shew itself."

"You don't think I could act?"

"Hardly. I question if you are thoughtful enough. The only thing is, I have noticed you have the power of concentrating your whole mind on the question of the moment."

A slow smile played about her features, and again that sudden self-distrust moved him.

"Sometimes I am accused of being bitter and sarcastic," she said; "how do you account for that?"

"Possibly through the books you have read."

"I see."

There was a long pause and still she looked across the garden. He watched her, and something in her quiet pose and steady gaze attracted him strangely. She seemed to have changed suddenly, and to have the look of a woman who had felt deeply, but learnt the folly of showing it.

He felt as if he could have gone on looking at her indefinitely.

And still she was silent, and still he watched her; and a strong desire grew up in him to tell her that Chip wasn't good enough for her.

He wanted to explain that he was a real good fellow, but not the man to satisfy her.

Then he laughed at himself.

"What had it to do with him?" he asked, and shrugged his shoulders carelessly. "Love was mostly a farce and marriage a lottery, and she was sure to find it out some day, sooner or later."

"Am I right?" he asked at last, with a smile.

She turned and looked at him critically, as if reading how far she might trust him.

Evidently what she saw satisfied her, for she replied very quietly, as she looked away again.

"No; quite wrong."

He looked surprised, but waited for her to speak again.

"Are you leaving to-morrow?" she asked.

"Yes; I think so."

"Then, in all probability, we shall never meet again."

He hesitated a moment, he had scarcely thought about it before.

"I suppose so," he said at last.

"Then I don't know that I need mind telling you why you are wrong. I feel sure I can trust you to guard my confidence."

"You can," he answered simply.

"It will perhaps help you to judge better in future," she went on, then paused a few moments.

"It isn't much," she said at last, "at least it won't seem much to anyone else. It began seven years ago, when I was nineteen. I mean my troubles began then; just at the time when a girl usually expects to have some of her best years. Three months after I left school my mother broke a blood vessel and went out of her mind. I nursed her for two years, during which time she could never be left, night or day. I don't know if you know anything about these cases, but they are among the most pitiful things in life. It broke my father's heart, and I worshipped him. The invalid turns against her nearest and dearest, and he was not strong and well enough to cope with the bitterness of it. When she died, and I was free, I thought to devote every hour to making up to him a little for the past two years, but he was killed in a railway accident four months afterwards."

She paused, and he thought she caught her breath to steady her voice.

Presently she went on quietly: "We were left very poor, and I had to go out as a governess. I won't pretend that I liked it, because I didn't; I hated it. I had to be in London, and I love the country with all my heart. But I stuck to it for four years, and then Phil managed to offer me a home."

She paused again, then added: "If you did not know it before, you know now, that there are some people who have seen so much real trouble that they can take the little inevitable cares too lightly to seem to notice them at all."

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He looked at her with a new admiration in his keen eyes. The moon came out from behind a cloud, and lit up her face. In the pale light she looked strangely beautiful to him, and there was that in her expression which moved him as no woman's face had ever moved him before. He had never been really in love in his life, but in that deep moment he knew that he wanted to fold her to his heart.

Yet he only said simply: "You are very plucky and you have taught me a lesson."

She laughed softly, though the conversation had brought a shadow into her eyes that he had not seen there before.

"And you have encouraged me," she said, "by paying such a tribute, however unintentional, to my success; for I would not like anything there may be in my life ever to damp anyone else's for a moment. We part to-morrow as mutual benefactors, which is as it should be."

Harry Melville looked across the garden in his turn, and there was a long pause.

"We part to-morrow," she had said, and the words seemed to ring in his ears.

"Why should they part?" he asked. "Why should not he be the one to make up to her for those sad years?"

He looked into her face, and the longing strengthened within him to take her in his arms.

He was about to speak, when she intercepted him by saying with a little smile: "My clouds have not all blown by yet, but I hope they will eventually."

"I hope so, too," he said, with an earnestness that made her start, for hitherto he had been usually flippant or callous with her.

She looked at him, and something in his eyes made her turn a little pale.

He saw it, and asked suddenly, in a voice that was new to him. "Is there anything now?"

"Yes; I have a lover and we are separated," she said, simply; and there was a long silence between them.

"I don't know why I should confide in you like this," she continued presently; "but somehow you draw me out whether I wish or not. I suppose it is because there is something so strong and sure about you."

He sat with his face half-turned from her, looking straight before him, and did not reply.

"He is a great friend of Chip's," she went on; "we found it out the day after he came, and that is why we have been so friendly together. He is in Australia now."

"You are not wearing a ring," he said questioningly, in a forced voice.

"No. It is because his people won't acknowledge it, nor mine, so we can't be engaged openly, but it doesn't make much difference. He is very poor, you know, but I don't mind. I shall go out to him as soon as he is able to have me."

"Have you been engaged long?"

"Five years!"

"Five years?" he repeated incredulously.

"Yes;" and she smiled softly. "We may have to wait another five, but if it were ten or fifteen, I should still wait. I know you don't believe much in love, and that kind of thing, but I don't like you any the less. Probably it is not your fault, and I always feel sorry for people who think like that, because of what they miss. Don't be alarmed, I'm not going to give you a lengthy, sentimental description of what Tom and I feel, only I can assure you it's something that more than makes up for every year of weary waiting."

He turned to her again and saw her with the love-light shining in her eyes; and his face was very white.

Then he looked into the night, and a sudden awakening came to him. His past life flashed through his mind, and in that brief space he probed into it corners, and realised, as he had never done before, how empty and hollow and unreal it had been.

With all his theorising and philosophising, what did he actually know of the passions of the human heart, compared to this girl beside him?

With all his time and opportunities, what memories had he, either of joys or sorrows, to keep his heart warm in the winter of his years?

He had been content with a cut and dried definition of Love and scoffed at anything that outstepped the limits he assigned.

And now? . . . .

Now he knew, what no amount of reasoning could have taught him. He knew that love is not a formula nor a theory, nor anything that can be understood by thinking about it, but something to be truly known by experience only—a good thing that comes into some lives and makes them beautiful.

A step on the terrace disturbed them and Yetta turned quickly.

"It is Chip looking for me," she said, "I must go."

Then she rested her hand for a moment on his arm.

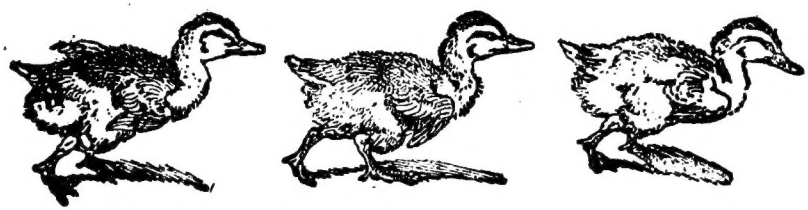
"I have enjoyed our conversation very much," she said. "Thank you for being so sympathetic. I am sorry we must lose sight of each other so soon, but it is generally the way with Hydro friendships.

"I hope some day soon you'll prove for yourself that there is a love that is worth waiting years for."

"I have proved it," he said, half to himself, and Yetta wondered as she turned away.

She did not know that that proving had been in the last half-hour.

GERTRUDE PAGE.



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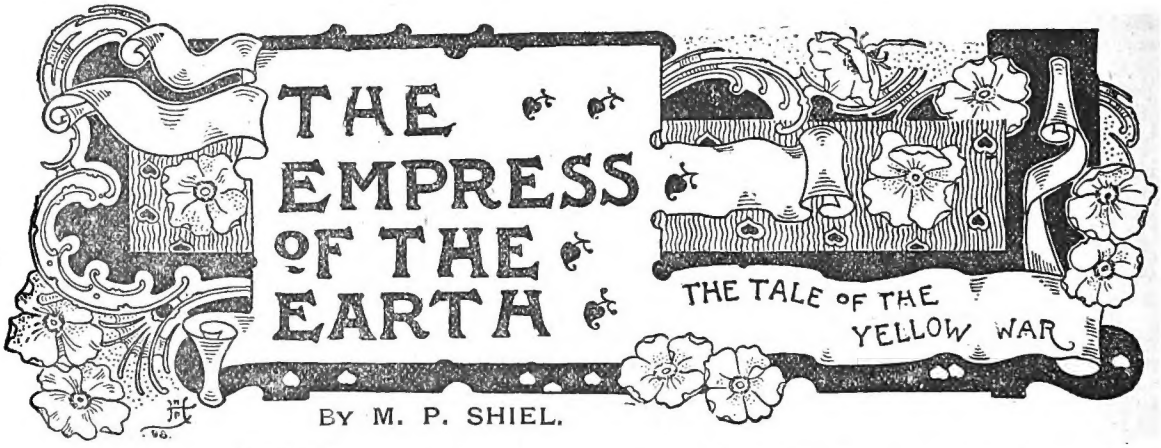

BY M. P. SHIEL.

SUMMARY.

Yen How, a shrewd Chino-Japanese doctor, falls desperately in love with Ada Seward, an English nursemaid. His advances are rudely repulsed, however; but he leaves England with a fixed determination to win the object of his affections in spite of all opposition.

Yen How goes first to Japan as a Japanese, where he becomes intimate with the prime minister, Marquis Ito, to whom he proposes a league between the two races of China and Japan, and an immense scheme by which Europe may be reduced to a waste, and China become the Empress of the Earth with scarcely an effort of her own. He then goes to China and becomes virtual ruler of that nation. In the course of a conversation which he has with Li Hung Chang he unfolds his scheme for setting all the European Powers against Great Britain. After the slaughter China will step in and conquer the remnants of the armies.

War is declared between Great Britain and France and Germany and Russia. The British fleet meets the Allied ships in Mid-channel and a battle ensues. Although the British vessels are outnumbered by two to one, the superior tactics of the British, and of John Hardy, a consumptive midshipman and a genius for modern warfare (who escapes on the *Jupiter* from the fight, and rams all the transports some distance away), result in the destruction of the Allied fleet. Hardy is ill for a time, and on his recovery decides to go to China. Before going, however, he endeavours to obtain a promise of marriage from Miss Bosey Jay, a young lady artist, but is refused. He goes to the Palace Theatre of Varieties, and there meets Ada Seward, the nursemaid with whom Yen How is in love. She sends him home intoxicated, and a week later he is in Paris, where he has a row with Edropol, the Bulgarian duellist. John, however, does not fight, but goes to Berlin, and from thence to Petersburg. Here he sends a letter to Bobbie, his old servant in England, and starts out for China by the overland route. Yen How organises an army of 400,000,000 souls—men, women, and children—to overrun Europe when the time is ripe. He is sitting in his garden when the capture of John Hardy is announced to him.

John is brought before Yen and they quarrel. The former fires at the Chinaman, but the bullet strikes a breast-plate of steel and does no harm. John is seized and thrown into prison. Meanwhile, the British China squadron, failing to obtain the promised assistance from Japan, engages the Allied fleet, and defeats it, but at a cost of all the ships but three, which are shortly afterwards chased and attacked by the Japanese fleet. Affairs now assume a serious aspect in Europe, and the British rout the Germans at New Brandenburg with a loss of 150,000 men. Foo-chee loves Ah-lin (they are in the same Chinese regimental company), but the latter is loved by Sin-wan, a warder of the Imperial Prison. Ni-ching-tang is Foo-chee's father (although Sin-wan does not know this), and one of the scullions of Yen How's kitchen. John Hardy is cruelly tortured by Sin-wan, acting under Yen How's instructions. Ni-ching-tang, Foo-chee's father, discovers that Sin-wan has murdered his son and Ah-lin. He then goes in revenge and drugs Sin-wan, and enables John Hardy to escape in a boat to Kiao-Chau. The British warship *Iphigenia*, which escaped from the Japanese ships in the last battle, is run ashore at Kiao-Chau, now occupied by the Chinese. The British take possession of the fort and hold it against the Celestials.

CHAPTER XXI.

"What a Face!"

During the afternoon of the seventh day after leaving Tungchow, John Hardy, hugging the coast, arrived in the locality of Kiao-chau harbour. The solitary helmsman had made a good voyage, being familiar with the ocean-winds and their moods, and having an old comradeship with the brine and spray. However, he had several times got wet, and every few minutes now was shaken by a moist cough, which was alternated by rather frequent vomitings due to a constant sickness of the stomach.

He was being wafted along by a gentle breeze, when he spied a portion of a ship's bow above the thin, inaudible fringe of foam which lined the coast afar. And at once, noting its course, he put out further to sea, and lay to ten miles from land.

He guessed at once from the fragmentary look of the wreck that the Chinese had been busy with the English sailors, of whom he had been told. At eleven o'clock, taking advantage of the night wind, he turned eastward, and ran in for the harbour. Unfortunately, all he knew about it was its locality, as the map with which he was provided gave him no details of its features. Ni-ching-tang, indeed, had told him that the Englishmen were upon an *island* in the harbour; but when he entered the basin he saw no island, for in the darkness and distance the contours of the island, which, on the east, is near to the mainland, seemed part of it.

The moon was young, and only just rising; it was a night of stars; things near were visible, things remote lay in a mystery of shadow.

John Hardy ran his bow gently upon a gravelly bottom near the east entrance of the harbour, intending to mount the rising ground and search for the island. For what he knew he might be already on it.

In this way, he came to the east fort, now mostly in ruins. He passed through a broken arch, and saw guns lying at random in the court. He examined the battlemented square, and entered what remained of the heavily-armed works. But there was nowhere any sign of a human being.

His search was conducted with extreme caution. With the same care he descended once more to his boat, pushed her off, and made for the opposite side, where he saw a stone-work outline against the sky. Here the ascent was steeper; he scrambled up a pebbly footpath, scraped through some scrub, and entered the fortification. There was less marked destruction on this than at the east fort. He examined scarp, and counterscarp, glacis, and donjon, and saw no one. Then he entered an inner court, where there was a low building with small, barred windows, the barracks and mess-room of the former garrison. And in three of the windows near the ground he saw light.

He fell to his hands and knees, and crept toward one of the openings. As he drew nearer he could hear a sound of laughter, and someone protesting in harsh gibberish. He knew now that he was among Chinese. But he continued to advance, eager to acquire some sort of knowledge of the facts of his situation. He reached the window, lifted his head, and peeped in.

The room which he saw was long, and surrounded by beds at regular intervals. On most of these lay Chinamen

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asleep, three only were intently playing some sort of dice-game at a table on which was a lantern.

As Hardy looked—before he could run—before he could cover his mouth—he was seized by a sudden coughing which sounded through the still night and the quiet room.

The three Chinamen sprang up at once, and looked in amazement in the direction of the sound, then snatching three rifles, and making a great noise, they rushed towards the door.

Hardy, too, was off, running; but before he could cross the breadth of the yard, the three men were out of the door. At the moment, he was in the shadow of the buttress of a barbacan, and he knew that if he left it to cross the strip of moonlight which lay along the exit from the yard, he must be seen. He stood still, therefore, crouching in the deepest shade.

The three, in a state of great excitement, ran towards the spot which he had just left, and finding nothing, scattered through the small yard in flurried search about the deep embrasures of arches, and the black shade of turret or buttress. Their eager examination was disorganised, the second again scrutinising a spot which the first had just searched, and the third, perhaps, following suit.

It was all over in the space of certainly not more than a minute. One of the Chinamen rushed to the corner in which John Hardy crouched, his hands out groping, and in a few seconds he was followed by the second, and in a few seconds more by the third. And they dropped like a line of little wooden soldiers, upon which one blows obliquely, one after the other, stiffly, at full length. The knife which Ni-ching-tang had given to John Hardy was no sooner out of the first than it was in the second, and instantly afterwards in the third. Before the startled sleepers within had rubbed their eyes, sprung to their feet, and snatched their weapons, he had diminished the population of China by three. It was the first-fruits of his vengeance.

Now, meantime, was his chance to run, and he ran. Thirty Chinese soldiers, however, were after him, and one saw him as he slipped through the exit from the inner to the outer court-yard. This man raised the hue and cry, and it became a question of running, first towards the outer exit, and secondly through the scrub, and down the steep hill-side, guns popping all the while, and the Chinamen screaming in an ecstasy of excitement.

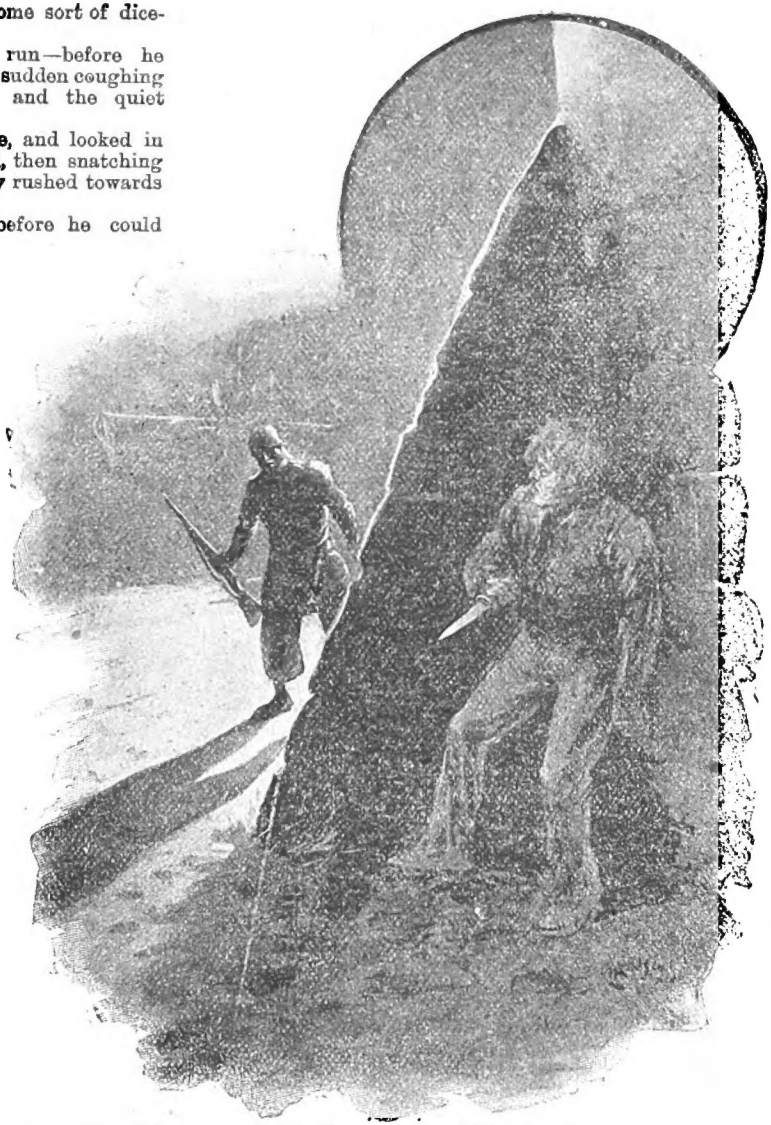
Behind the rising ground, on the general level of the mainland, there was a camp of a half-regiment of the old regular army of China under the command of a Japanese lieutenant; and these, hearing the firing, quickly set off at the double up the gentle incline at the back of the fort.

John Hardy was saved from the shots of the thirty on the top of the plateau by doubling and bending among the scrub, but by the time he had plunged and scrambled to the bottom of the steep path, bullets were whistling round him. The moon, however, had now become obscured, and the riflemen, as they ran, shot at random.

There lay his boat, her prow just touching and swaying in the gravel. If he could push her off, and gain the shelter of the house-deck, he would be safe. Two of the Chinamen, however, who had not slackened their speed in order to shoot, were near upon him; and when he leapt to his bow, and put out the oar to shove off, one of them, and immediately the other, took hold of it. A short struggle ensued. One of the Chinamen, struck by a flying bullet in the nape, relaxed his hold and dropped; at the same time John Hardy's power of grasp failed, and the oar slipped from his grasp; but so suddenly that the pulling Chinaman slid on his heels, and fell backward into the surf. Hardy was quick to leap upon him, buried his knife in his bosom, regained the oar, and the next moment had the *Taku* afloat.

He hurried astern, trimmed the sail, and half sheltering himself under the deck, contrived to steer, making further up the harbour, where he now knew the island must be.

In a minute or two the boat became the aim of the three hundred or more additional rifles which had now arrived from the plain. They riddled her hull and sail, but she kept on her way till there came a tremendous boom of big



One of the Chinamen rushed to the corner in which John Hardy crouched.

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Two men had him by the throat.

cannon from a quite unexpected quarter, and suddenly the splintered *Taku* dipped her bow, and disappeared in five fathoms of water.

The Chinese, apparently, had no heavy guns mounted ready for use at the fort, for they fired none; but the English had: and when the sentries reported a daring Chinese junk approaching the island, she was fired at; and she promptly sank, riddled by her foes, shattered by her friends.

In all the harbour of Kaio-Chau no Chinese craft had dared for weeks to appear.

Happily the outward bulge of the island was discernible at the moment when the *Taku* went down, and not more than 500 yards distant at its nearest point. John Hardy began to swim: The Chinese, astonished at the sinking by the white men of a boat containing a white man, ceased firing, though a wanton shot or two dropped about the swimmer.

Panting hard, he reached the rear point of the island, where a sparse growth of thin-trunked plane trees made a wood to the water's edge. And he had hardly trailed his dripping form out of the surf, when two men, springing from nowhere, had him by the throat, and he was on his back with a pistol at his temple.

John Hardy said to himself:

"They will do well."

And he added aloud:

"I am an Englishman."

There was a close scrutiny of his face, a chuckle, a few exclamations, and he was on his feet.

The search-light apparatus of the fort was out of order. Till he spoke, no one on the island had had the faintest suspicion of the truth.

In ten minutes he was in a lighted room, with nearly all the hundred and fifty gathered round him, hands on knees. There were far more questions than answers. Chatter, chatter went the tongue of Jack.

"But you have not told us, sir, who you are," said Murray.

"My name is John Hardy," he replied, "and I am come to China in search of my ship, the *Powerful*. Can you give me any news of her whereabouts?"

"Oh, Lord!" cried a young blue-jacket, George Liversey, "just hark at *that! Powerful*, is it? Why, sir, if you'd as much water in your inside to-night as the *Powerful's* got, you wouldn't be thinking about *Powerfuls*, I don't think."

"There has been a battle?"

"That there has, sir."

"Who won?"

"We did."

"By how many ships?"

"The one we came here in, and two the Japs sunk."

"The Japs?"

"Aye."

"They sunk some ships?"

"They did that."

"But they were our allies, were they not?"

"Funny allies at that."

"They gave you no warning of their real intentions, I'll be bound," said John Hardy.

"Not they," someone replied, "it was bash-into-'em, take-me-as-you-find-me-boys, and no mistake. They didn't even carry a flag."

"They have broken the law of nations," said Hardy, looking on the ground. Then, after a few seconds, as if musing, he added: "They have violated the Law of Man."

And the words, taken in conjunction with the most strange, grave face from which they came, had in them something so solemn, and judicial, and meaningful, that, for a minute or two, silence fell upon the men; and they looked at his bent form, somehow expecting him to utter something further of singular and momentous purport.

But he gazed on the ground and said nothing.

Already this grey-haired youth, this venerable stripling, had produced a profound impression upon them.

Somebody on the outskirts of the crowd whispered to somebody else:

"What a face he's got!"

And the whisper went round. And now it was: "Just look at the phiz of him;" and now it was: "I don't think he's all there;" and now it was: "Lor'! look at his face."

It was a face in which there was something thrillingly *wild*; the face not merely of a judge and an avenger; but of a judge and an avenger come back from the grave, with just that hint of the Ineffable which makes us shudder.

Yet he sat there simply enough, looking on the ground, with one elbow on his wet knee.

CHAPTER XXII.

Murray's Diary.

Mr. Murray, the nominal head of the crew at the fort—though in reality he was only the first among equals—on opening one of the chests brought from the *Iphigenia* in the pinnace, found a quantity of notepaper, and as there were pens and ink in the fort, he bound the notepaper in some brown paper, and sewed them together, wisely determining to keep a record of the varied days of this strangely-fated crew.

Under date June 8th we find as follows:

"June 8th.—Last night, near twelve, a strange thing happened. We sank a Chinese boat in the harbour with No. 3 south-bastion three-incher, thinking it an enemy. It proved to have contained an Englishman, named John Hardy, ship *Powerful* (as he says). He reports himself as

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from Pekin in search of ship. That's about all we can get from him at present. No explanation so far as to how he escaped death in long voyage through China. Something strange about him somewhere, and men pass astonished remarks.

"Still two sacks of rice left, last of third being used at dinner to-day. Also two hind legs of camel with quarters, three small sacks roots, two jars Chinese spirit from the millet-farm, and about a pound of tobacco. The sow, Joyce says, is near her confinement, and a day or two should bring us great things from her. Harris, Tom Brown, and Daly complain of fever, and Machen of violent headache. Otherwise all well. Tom Newton to be buried presently.

"June 9th.—Tom Newton buried last night at ten. For last message to his wife see under June 6. This morning noticed a considerable body of Chinese (guessed 500) march past on brow of hill east of island. Big dust-cloud ahead, looking like horse-artillery. Brassey says they mean to give us fight. But I disagree. Their game is to starve us out—if they can.

"This noon, Council. Resolved: that at midnight thirty hands should swim to mainland at different points, taking Sniders in waterproof bags, and ammunition. To meet near lake to N.E., and make a dash for probable mules on tea-farm, N. of lake. Long discussion of ways and means. Resolved: first volunteer to be leader. To surprise of all, the stranger, Hardy, volunteered first. Had listened to discussion without a word, turning from speaker to speaker. Is small and seems weak in chest. Sow doing well.

"June 10th.—This day cook, to surprise of all, produced pudding made of roots and honey, found, he says, near west stream in valley on island. First we heard of honey here, lads all wild with excitement, and everybody clapping cook on back. Am now smoking last pipe. Tobacco done. Also last of German coffee, and yesterday no more sugar. Lads hope for unlimited supplies of honey, but I rather doubtful. Not the right place even for the wild kind.

"Expedition last night very successful. Two mules (all there were on farm), also sack rice (brought over by pinnace), also a skin containing some sort of oil, and no-one injured. Joyce says it is good for food, but Brassey denies, and the two came to blows. Lads came back speaking well of Hardy, some saying that he means more than he says.

"Most of day spent in washing shirts and sheets by hands. Harris and Brown still bad with fever, and now also Collins, but Daly better.

"He is an original, this man (I mean Hardy). To-day, while washing clothes, great discussion between Brassey and Davis, which nearly came to blows. Says Brassey, 'Why, the man is fifty-five,' he says, 'if he's a day.' Davis answers that he will lay to it that he is a lad of twenty-five, and not a day older. Then other hands join in, one saying this, and another that, and the lads getting warm. Hardy sitting a good way off, washing sheets. One says: 'Why not ask him, and settle the question?' But no one volunteers to do that. Everybody going to have a look at sow this afternoon, and plenty of bets. But nothing yet to report.

"June 11th.—Great excitement this morning, and all the Chinese liquor finished. Sow littered with four, and beauties all: one pinky-white, two pinky-white and black, and one pure black. The lads all ready for fun, and everybody determined to make a day of it. Hardy alone drank nothing. Brassey very rowdy, but afterwards got to sleep. One of mules refused to eat roots, and was killed in afternoon. A detachment of lads down by sea-shore cutting down trees for fire-wood with swords, and one hatchet. Not an adze in fort. Very slow business. Hardy recommended blasting, and this tried with success. But fearful anxiety beginning to be felt about powder and shot. Only three rounds of ammunition left to some of big guns, and no possibility apparently of making powder for ourselves. At six o'clock, Council. Resolved: to make a dash in small hours of morning for west fort in order to seize possible stores and ammunition, Hardy leading. Pinnace to take two detachments of twenty-five each. A desperate piece of business, in my opinion not yet necessary, but proposed by Hardy, who has seen fort, and seconded by lads. Search this afternoon for more honey, but without success. Men walking about with hands in pockets, without tobacco.

"June 12th.—Lovel, William Brown, and Jackson dead, and not less than thirty Chinese. I with bullet hole in my left hand, very painful. Result: two barrels of powder, and a green tea box half full of Lee-Metford magazine rifle cartridges. Half of us, in retreat, swam across harbour-mouth from west fort to east, Hardy among us. Then along east side of harbour by land, pursued by Chinese, and then, swimming again, to island. The toughest job we have done yet. Our guns, ammunition, and some of our clothes, meanwhile, in boat, with captured things, and we swimming with swords in our teeth.

"But the curious thing is this. As we walked toward our fort, the day began to break, and Hardy having on no shirt, we saw all his body in a queer bruised sort of mess, and two letters, quite distinct, an A, and an S, looking as if they had been branded into his right breast. He throws no light upon himself, and not one of us has pluck to ask him. It is clear that he is a gentleman, and it is 'sir this' and 'sir that' from all the lads to him.

"June 13th.—Says Brassey to me this noon, 'Wasn't there,' says he, 'something about a John Hardy in the battle of Shoreham that that collier from Perim reported to us at Hong Kong before we sailed north?' 'Yes,' I said, 'there was.' 'Then this,' says he, 'is the man.' 'There are many John Hardy's,' I said. 'But this,' says he, 'is the man.' 'What makes you think that?' I said. 'Everything,' says he. And he was so certain of it, that he partly made me so as well. He has gone whispering it, too, to all the lads, and they are talking it over amongst themselves. Nobody asks Hardy, but before this day is out, I mean to put the question straight before him. Gun cleaning pretty nearly all day, and Walters, who has been down to the water's edge on east side, reports that Chinese are heaping a lot of stones on edge of cliff, probably with intention of building. Let them build away. The four piggies doing well, and the old girl as pleased as punch. We shall never have the heart to kill them. Not a scrap of baccy, and no more honey.

"June 14th.—It is to be hoped that this Hardy is not come here to lead us all to the devil, but that is about what I suspect it is going to amount to. Time will show. He has a strong influence over lads, and is all for wild schemes and adventures. Says he last night, most of us sitting about in the north mess-room, 'But what,' says he, suddenly, 'are your ultimate aims?' 'Ultimate aims, sir?' says Brassey. 'You don't mean to live here always, I suppose?' says Hardy. 'It's enough for us to think of getting food to eat, without looking so far ahead,' says Martin Hall. 'Don't be a fool, Hall,' says Tom Brown; 'listen to what the gentleman says.' 'I have not *said* anything,' says Hardy, 'I merely ask a question, which I leave to your reflection. If you will think it over, I believe you will be wise. And if you cannot find an answer, come to me, and perhaps I may be able to help you.' He very seldom speaks, this Hardy, and when he does, the lads listen wonderfully to him. For quite five or six minutes, I suppose, not one spoke a word after he had said this. And now they are all saying that he's got some fine scheme in his head. This afternoon at five, Council. Resolved: That the Chinese preparations for building on cliff be investigated and destroyed, if necessary, between twelve and one to-night. Hardy proposed as an amendment: That an attack be at once made on Chinese village, three miles to S.E., for purpose of getting in large store of provisions in event of contingencies. But his voice overborne by seventy-five to seventy-three votes. This afternoon Day sent to wind octagonal clock in B

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bastion, and broke main-spring. Have not asked Hardy anything about battle of Shoreham, or marks on chest, but mean to, sooner or later.

"June 15th.—This day extraordinary scene at Council. It seems that Brassey, with five or six others, came to Hardy about noon, a sort of deputation, telling him that the men had been thinking over his words of two nights before, and were wanting him to summon a council and say what was on his mind. Hardy says yes, he would, as they wanted it. So about four, Council. Hardy stands up, the lads sprawling all about, on benches, on the floor, looking at him. Hardy has in his hand one of the three Bibles from the *Iphigenia* third chest. Well, everybody waits, wondering now what is coming. Hardy begins to talk, and keeps on talking for half-an-hour. All about himself first; his family, where he was born, everything; then about his coming to China to seek *Powerful*, and his capture by the Chinese at Pekin. Suddenly off he tears his shirt, and shows wounds and scars all over body; and he points to the grey patches in his head: Chinese torture, he says; some of the men wiped their eyes, so movingly he spoke.

"Sometimes when his face is animated, I declare he looks like a lad of nineteen, and it is hard not to love this man somehow. Then he went on to speak of the Japs and their treachery to the British ships; then he said that all the white men in China had been massacred by the Chinese; and last of all, he came out with the announcement that the Chinese and Japanese combined are about to attack Europe. Everyone held his breath at this, and we were all pretty excited by now. 'Well, what are we to say of such a race, men?' says Hardy. 'Do you not agree with me that the earth would be well rid of such a people?' 'Yes!' we cry, 'yes! yes!' we all shout out. 'As for me,' he says, 'I, here and now, before you all, and before Almighty God, devote my entire life henceforth to their destruction; and I invite you all to take that oath with me.' And so saying he lifts the Book, and kisses it. The men leapt round him at once.

"One cries out: 'You are the John Hardy of the Shoreham battle, aren't you?' Hardy says, 'Yes.' Then Brassey roars out: 'Will you be our leader?' and every man jack of us cheers this to the echo; and then Hardy hands the Book to each of us, and as we kiss it, we each of us grips his hand in token of obedience to his orders. And as the last of us grips his hand (that was Paddy Burke), Hardy, turning away from us, goes leaning out of window, and Brassey says a tear was rolling down his cheek which he wanted to hide. I suppose there never was such a scene in the world; it was just as if we were all mesmerised by him, some of us wanting to cry, and I as moved by his influence as the rest. The lads are swearing to follow Hardy through thick and thin.

"The expedition last night did nothing, and discovered little. There were merely some piles of stone and two carts, but without mules. In one of the carts a hard-backed land-turtle, which lads brought back. But their climb up that steep hill as good as useless. From their report it is probable that the regular Chinese force in the neighbourhood is being increased. Happily, perhaps, for us, this is a thinly populated part of the country. Something will have to be done for food, and that soon. It remains to be seen what sort of stuff this Hardy is made of. No one can deny that we got on pretty fairly before he came. Heat fearful to-day, but rain now pouring in torrents outside.

"June 16th.—At midday-mess Hardy says to lads: 'don't scatter, men. I wish to talk with you at once;' so immediately after meal, Council. Hardy at head of table, I on right, Brassey on left, Tom Brown, Davis and Joyce sitting near. Says Hardy: 'You have been good enough,' he says, 'to choose me for your leader. I hope to prove myself worthy of your favour, but for the present I prefer to consult with you, rather than to give you orders. Here we are, a splendidly trained set of fellows, and Britons — 148 of us.

"'I believe we might be able to do something more for our country and ourselves than killing a few Chinamen now and then. The thing is to know what we want to do, and to set about it in the right way; and, as a rule the right way is sure to be the simplest way.' 'Hear, hear,' says Brassey, who is a regular champion of Hardy's, and everybody gives a nod at somebody else. 'Well, then,' says Hardy, 'but no man can work without Tools, and every workman should stick to his own Tool, the carpenter to his chisel, and the blacksmith to his sledge. We, men, are Sailors; and the Tool of a Sailor is a Ship. What we have got to do, then, is to get a Ship.'

"This went straight to the lads—he spoke so sweetly and simply to the understanding of everybody. We cheered, every man, though not a soul could guess where this ship was to come from, or what we were to do with it when we got it. But the mere fact of his saying it made the thing seem possible.

"'A ship, then,' goes on Hardy; 'any sort of ship, so long as we've got our Tool to work with. And you mustn't think that I am child enough to propose to you anything that is impossible for you to do. I have studied you carefully since I have been among you, and I know what each of you can do, and what the whole of you together can do, and what you cannot do. As for ships, they are lying round you in plenty, only waiting for you to go and take one.'

"Everybody looked at him in surprise at this.

"'Ships, sir,' said Brassey, 'whereabouts?'

"'All round the Chinese coasts,' says Hardy. 'I told you, didn't I, that the Chinese have seized and massacred in a body all the Europeans they could find in China. Well, at the time of the massacre, there were, of course, merchant ships of all nations in every Chinese port, and you may be sure that the Chinese took special care to overpower and secure the sailors on board these ships, lest they should escape home and tell what the Chinese were up to. Meanwhile, the ships themselves remain, probably quite empty, or perhaps with a few Chinese on board in charge. I myself saw five in Tientsin harbour when I sailed down the Peiho to come here, and there did not seem to be anybody on board. So you see we have plenty of ships, and to spare.'

"'But,' said I, 'how are you to get to them?'

"'In the pinnace,' says Hardy.

"'The pinnace can't carry even a quarter of us,' said I.

"'Then she shall carry half a quarter of us,' said he; 'and the rest of you will remain here till we come for you in the ship.'

"'But how are the rest of us to live without the pinnace?' said I. 'We can't carry bags of rice on our backs across the harbour, sir.'

"'I know that very well,' says he, 'and that is why I proposed to you the day before yesterday to make a raid on a village, instead of going to search into what the Chinese are building, which does not immediately concern us. What we have to do, in the first place, is to get in a good stock of provisions by means of a series of bold and well-planned raids into the thinly-populated country round, first crushing the small Chinese battalion, if necessary; and when we have enough stores both for us who go, and you who remain, then, and not before, some of us will set off in the pinnace. That seems to me good sense.'

"'And to me!' cries Brassey, with a wave of the hand, 'and to me,' goes the cry down the benches.

"'But,' said I, 'when we have got our ship, what do we do with her—go home?'

"'No—that is not precisely what we swore to do,' says Hardy. 'As to what we will do with our ship, I have got a plan which I feel confident you will approve when I lay it before you. But there is a good deal to be done first, and I won't trouble you with that now. The first thing I want every man here to set his mind upon is to bring me into the fort here a live Chinaman with two sound legs. Without that nothing can be done.'

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"At this our astonishment knew no bounds. A live Chinaman!

"'And may I ask, sir,' said I, 'what it is you want a live Chinaman for?'

"'To send him on a message,' says he. 'It is the answer which he will bring back which will make our ship of any use to us.'

"'He won't come back,' said I.

"'He will,' says he.

"'Right you are, sir!' cries Brassey.

"'I will not keep you any longer now,' says Hardy. 'But later in the day, I will select a hundred of you to come with me to-night; and I recommend you to look to your swords and your rifles.'

"And with that we broke up, everyone forming part of a group to discuss our new man. The second mule killed to-day, and two more of our men complaining of fever trouble. Joyce talking of blowing up tortoise with gunpowder, and saying that they are good food in South Seas. Lads conversing about different brands of tobacco, and smelling keg."

CHAPTER XXIII.

Murray's Diary (continued).

"June 17th.—Harvey, Lane, Yates and Tom Joyce dead, Brassy wounded in leg, Harry Jones in leg, Field in shoulder, Burke in forearm, Mackay in forearm, Wright in groin, and I again in left hand near the old place—my bad luck. One or two wounds look ugly, but the rest not much. Bodies of Harvey, Yates, and Joyce with Chinese, but Lane brought back, and died in fort. Burial to-day at 3. 'Not less than fifty Chinese done for,' says Brassey. Result: splendid haul of three camels (one killed in battle, and carcase left behind), seven mules, twelve small animals like sheep, two sacks millet, and five rice. Returning loaded from village, met Chinese battalion cutting us off. Made quick charge, and thought they would turn tail, but didn't. Sharp fight. Literally forced our way through them. But our powder getting very low. What shall we do? Lads very well pleased with expedition, and speak well of Hardy. He proposes that one of mules be set aside for drawing one of Chinese carts on top of hill, to bring home hawl on next expedition. But mules won't eat roots, have to be fed on rice, and grass on island scanty. Hardy says salted mule-meat. Weather is very hot for this. But will be tried. No live Chinaman to be got. They know how to run, these Chinese. At four, Council. Resolved: to repeat raid this night on village, N.W. by N., six miles off, according to report of Fraser and Brassey. Hardy looking far from well."

"The lasso falls clean over Chinaman's head."

[Here follows Murray's account of three fresh raids, too minutely described to be reproduced here, and conducted with varying success. In the last of the three Hardy did not join, being ill.]

"June 21st.—At last, live Chinaman. Captured at high noon. Five lads, among them Hardy, swam one by one to east side, diving most of time. On cliff some Chinamen pouring stones out of carts for building. Men, hiding in scrub, climb up cliff-side, no very easy matter with weapons and other things in hands. Peep over cliff-edge, and decide which Chinaman it is to be. Then rush out. Chinese off in their mule-carts, and a squad of soldiers, some distance off, give fire, but at random, being taken unawares. As marked Chinaman turns to gallop off in mule-cart, Brassey, who has lasso, throws; and lasso falls clean over Chinaman's head, dragging him from cart, which gallops off alone. Splendid feat for Brassey, for Chinaman was not near, and Brassey has wounded leg. Chinaman quickly bound, and hustled down hill-side. Pinnace waiting at shore to bring lads and Chinaman, and Chinamen a-top still banging away. But no one hurt. Lads say that Hardy gripped Brassey's hand, and gave it a squeeze. It's like Hardy's decent way. Chinaman being very kindly treated by Hardy's orders. A brawny, raw-boned brute, and seems not to know what to make of treatment.

"June 22nd.—To-day at one, Council. Resolved: That sufficient stores now in fort to last all two weeks, and that pinnace starts as soon as Chinaman is sent on message. Resolved: That Chinaman be sent to-morrow, Hardy wishing him to grow accustomed to kind treatment before starting. Hardy has chosen to accompany him on voyage the following:—Brassey, Tom Brown, Fraser, Burke, Knollys, Leaf, Pawsons, John Jones, Maitland, Samuels, Clayton, Rogers, Machen, Gibbs, John Pound, Maunder, Chapman, and Glyn. I remain in charge. Practically no powder will be left when lads set out. To-day overhawling of pinnace, and preparations. Lads found some opium on Chinaman, which they smoked, and some of them still very queer.

"June 23rd.—To-day great fun, and lads talking of sagacity of Hardy. But no one understands meaning of message. Chinaman brought before Hardy after mid-day meal. Hardy at table, with pen, ink, and paper. We all standing round, Chinaman looking queer. Hardy looks at him and says: 'You talkee English?' Chinaman makes no sign. 'Can you talkee English?' No sign. Up jumps Hardy on a sudden, a razor in his hand, and he seizes hold of Chinaman's pig-tail, as if to cut it off. 'Oh, savee, savee,' cries Chinaman. 'Very good,' says Hardy, 'you talk English, then.' Hardy had guessed beforehand that he could, because Chinaman, on day of capture, had on European felt hat like those some of the Chinese boatmen wear at Shanghai; and that was why Hardy had singled

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out this particular Chinaman for capture. 'Well,' Hardy says: 'You poor man?' 'Me very poor,' says Chinaman. 'How much you give for one silk pig-tail?' says Hardy. 'Fifty tael,' says Chinaman. 'You got fifty tael to buy one pig-tail?' says Hardy. Chinaman looks scared. 'Fifty tael?' says he, 'no, no.' 'All right,' says Hardy, 'me going to cut off your pig-tail, and me going to give you letter to carry Pekin. You carry letter well, and bring back true answer soon, me promise to give you back pig-tail, and no do you any harm. You understand?' Chinaman trembling like a sail in the wind. But he says 'yes.' Hardy says: 'Very good.' Then he turns round to paper, tears half a sheet, and begins to write, lads looking over his shoulder. He writes:

"'To Ni-ching-tang, Imperial City, Pekin.

"'You tell me quick where Japanese navy is, or me very

Chinaman spied on east shore of mainland, making signals.

likely get caught, and then me tell Yen How who set me free. If you can write, you write name of place where navy is on this paper, and also name of your nephew at Tungchow, so that me may be sure the answer comes from you. If you no can write, you tell this man name of place, and name of nephew. Be quick, or me get caught, and tell Yen How about you.—John Hardy.'

"When Hardy had finished this letter, he read it aloud to Chinaman, and gave it to Chinaman. He said 'If you no be back in nine days from now, me burn your pigtail in fire, and you no have pigtail no more.' And with that, up he jumped to his feet, and wrapping pigtail round left hand, with two sweeps of razor he had it off about three inches from the root, leaving just enough for the man to plait it on to again. Chinaman curled and shivered, as though razor was in his flesh, and a fine long pigtail it is, too. Hardy then wrote name of Ni-ching-tang's nephew, by which I am to verify that Chinaman really has been to Ni-ching-tang, and handed paper to me to keep. Nephew's name is Li-kien. If Ni-ching-tang cannot read, Chinaman will deliver message verbally. It is clear that this man Ni-ching-tang has some strong motive for telling real truth to Hardy, but we none of us know what motive is, nor why Hardy is anxious about station of Japanese fleet. However, we have much confidence in his views. Chinaman was let free, and taken to mainland, and much fun we all had. Pinnace now ready, and the nineteen men to start at midnight Nearest treaty-port, according to map, is Chefoo. And to Chefoo they mean to go. Pinnace loaded with last coal in fort. Compass, sextant, chronometer, stores, and everything we can think of on board. Weather stifling hot, but lads in good spirits.

"June 24th.—Lads, apparently, got out of harbour all right last night. For us here the game is a waiting one. After to-morrow, by Hardy's orders, a man to be always on the look-out near the east fort during night. If lads get a ship she will show three lights in a triangle to let us know when she comes. They will send boats ashore to east headland, to take us off, we swimming to east side of harbour, and taking all live stock still left. If Chinaman not come back by the time Hardy returns, nothing to be done, and red light to be shown by sentry to ship. This day killed the sow. The lads yawning, and spoiling for a fight."

[Six days of the diary follow, containing nothing but trivial details of the life of the fort, and the account of a massing of some two thousand Chinese in the locality. The next entry of importance is on the 1st July.]

"July 1st.—This day at noon, Chinaman spied on east shore of mainland, making signals. Great excitement among lads, who have been dull. Sent two men to fetch Chinaman over, and the fuss that beggar made about coming into water lasted nearly an hour. At last lads managed to bring him over between them. Chinaman handed me Hardy's note to Ni-ching-tang, and underneath, in English characters, just legible, were the words 'Nagasaki' and 'Li-kien.' It is clear, then, that Chinaman did his work well, and the only thing open to doubt is whether Ni-ching-tang has told the truth in saying that Jap navy is at Nagasaki. Chinaman trembling with eagerness to get back pig-tail, doubting apparently that we would keep our word, and the lads having great sport in making him think that we wouldn't. Pig-tail produced at last, and lads lashing one another with it all over the place, to Chinaman's agony. Then pig-tail given to Chinaman to his great joy. But I don't think it prudent to let him go free, and am keeping him prisoner for some time.

"July 2nd.—Some lads sent out to scout report continued massing of Chinese tents on plain to S. W., 1,500 counted, and we here without the power of firing three rounds of shot. Heaven only grant that Hardy turns up trumps. The men seem to take him with perfect confidence, and the lapse of time makes no difference to them. It is wonderful to me how thoroughly Hardy has got over them. I never saw anything like it. The two hind quarters of sow completely spoiled owing to heat, and the men all saying it is head cook's fault, and he very sulky."

[On July 3rd there is no entry.]

(To be continued.)

"Pick-Me-Up."

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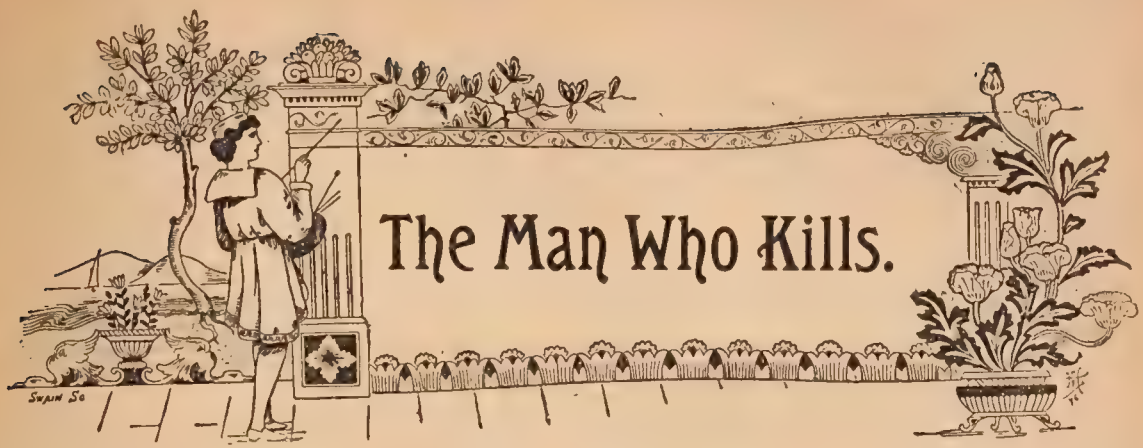

The Man Who Kills.

On a plain white slab in the dreary little cemetery of St. Jeane de Dieu, at Longue Pointe, Canada, are chisled these words: "*L'homme qui tue.*"

There are many resting there whose life was more eventful than his, but only numbers mark their graves, and they share the one big wooden cross, near the fence, in common.

Look at number twenty-three, for instance. It contains the remains of the beautiful Madame Réal, who kept the fashionable millinery shop in the Rue Ste. Catherine. She was wealthy, but had only enough left when her husband died to stock her establishment. One day she fell in love with Beaulieu, the rich hardware man, whose wife was plain and insipid, but rich. For three short years she was as happy as she could be, and then he became tired of her, and one Friday evening told her that he would see her no more. On Saturday morning she was violently insane.

Number fourteen was a distinguished officer in His Holiness's Foreign Legion during the Italian war for independence from religious power. He learnt the opium habit at Vancouver and cut his throat.

Number forty-five was a high Government official, who murdered his wife and three daughters during an attack of jealousy brought on by paresis—at that time not the fashionable disease it is at present. And so on.

Yet he is the only one that has a stone to cover him, and I had it put there myself and had the inscription cut at his own request.

Did he ever kill anyone? No, but he imagined he did, and to me, like him, that is pretty much the same thing.

He was a bright fellow. I know this because I went to school with him, and he loved the daughter of his uncle, the rich wholesale liquor merchant, Laframboise. Indirectly she was the cause of the whole sad history. His parents were dead and Laframboise brought him up. He was good to the boy, better than most uncles in similar circumstances, but later on he aspired to the Council Législatif, that strange mixture of modern politics and Louis XVI. manners, with hopes of Ottawa and the Senate. In such cases a man that would not sacrifice a cousin or nephew cannot expect to possess the confidence of a paternal Government. But I am running ahead of my story.

His name was Calixe, hers Louise. Her pet name was "Mouton" on account of her big, brown eyes and her easy temper—too easy and soft for the good of either of them. He had hair like that of an Indian, but softer and wavy, and a spirit to match. They were always together, and their callow love as children gradually transformed itself into the more presumptuous passion of young manhood and womanhood. French-Canadian children are very precocious in matters of that kind. Laframboise *père* never seemed to notice this, but when "Mouton" was sixteen, he decided that a certain red-cushioned arm-chair in the Legislative Council Chamber would be just the thing for him, and, as it was a Castor Government, it might be well to have a relative in the ranks of the clergy. So Calixe was told that as his uncle could not afford the expenses of the legal education first thought of, he had better go to the Grand Seminary, unless he wished to shift for himself.

Calixe was not a fool. He knew his uncle, and prepared to obey. The next time Louise came home from the convent he told her.

"Uncle wants me to be a crow," he said.

Strange how fast Catholic children in those days lost their reverence for the cloth.

"A crow!" exclaimed Louise, aghast, as she thought of fat Père Gonzaque, one of the confessors to the convent, who, she sometimes thought, tried to flirt with the bigger girls. "And what will become of me?"

"Don't fret, *ma petite* Louise," said Calixe, in the tone of authority he often assumed with her, and that made her think him so grand and wise. "You and I will get married after all."

"But crows cannot marry." Louise said tearfully.

"Of course not, silly; but I am not going to be one. My plans are not quite matured, but to please uncle I'll go to the seminary for a year or so, and then cut for the United States, and when I'm earning enough I will send for you, and you'll come. Won't you?"

"I will," said Louise, and they kissed one another and everything was settled. But children propose and guardians dispose, and Calixe had only been about a month at the seminary when his uncle told Louise to prepare herself for a visit to her aunt in Paris. When Calixe's next half-day off came, there was another consultation. The old gentleman never interfered with these. He knew better.

This time it was Louise that spoke first. "I am going to Paris," she said.

"Why?" he asked; "are not Canada and I good enough for you?"

"Oh, yes, too good, but papa wants me to go. There are social advantages in a trip like that, he says, that I must not miss."

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Calixe thought for awhile. He knew that Louise's soft nature would never summon courage enough to oppose her father's wishes. So he just pulled her down upon the sofa alongside of him. "Louise, *chérie*," he said, putting his arm round her, "it seems that we must part, but, at any rate, we can swear to be true to one another."

"Do you doubt me?" Louise asked, in an injured tone.

"No, *chérie*," he replied; "but it would please me to hear you swear it. All you have to do is to put your hand on the big crucifix and to repeat what I say, and then kiss the crucifix."

"All right," she said, "if it pleases you." So they swore. It did not seem such a terrible oath after all. He said: "I promise to love none but you, and marry none but you, or you may kill me." And she repeated it after him, only she felt a little shiver when she came to the killing part. They both kissed the crucifix on the same spot.

"Now, nothing can part us," he said. He repeated this when he kissed her good-bye on the steamer. They arranged that he should write her once a week, and that she should answer all his letters promptly. When he left the seminary and obtained work that would pay sufficiently, she would come to him, no matter what happened. He carried out his part of the programme well enough, but after writing once a week for two or three months without a single reply, he became disheartened. His next day off he spoke to his uncle about having written her—he did not say how often—without receiving any reply.

"She is too busy, my boy, with balls and parties and cavaliers," Laframboise *père* had replied. The last expression hurt Calixe deeply, but his uncle was too busy to think about such little things. Calixe waited for a whole year. He did not know that his letters never reached Louise.

He did some very disreputable things for a theological student. He used bad language, when alone, and finally turned to revenge for consolation. Nothing mean or petty, but a noble reckoning up of grievances was his aim! He would be a celebrated preacher, and from the pulpit he would denounce the women who by breaking their vows imperilled the souls of men.

He worked as only a young man possessing his iron constitution could. Gradually he managed to cast her from his thoughts, and even the announcement of her engagement to the rich Vicomte de Bergère left him comparatively unmoved. When they were married he became a priest, and when Madame de Bergère and her husband, who intended to risk some of his money in an attempt to make sugar out of Canadian beets, set foot on Madame's native soil, his reputation as a preacher was established.

It was at Nôtre Dame de Lourdes that the couple first attended mass after their arrival.

It was as much of a surprise to Calixe to find, when he mounted the pulpit, that they were among the congregation, as it was to Madame de Bergère to hear his voice. The interior of the church was dim, and at first she did not recognise him, but when he spoke she felt a cold thrill go through her, and if her husband had not been listening so intently he would have noticed her cheek pale. Calixe spoke from the Book of Judges. His text was from the story of Samson's fall: "She made him sleep upon her knees, and she called a man, and she caused him to shave off the seven locks of his head, and she began to afflict him, and his strength went from him." He had his sermon well prepared in his mind, but the sight of her aroused him and crowded the first thought out, and he preached such a stirring extemporaneous sermon as that congregation had never heard.

It ended thus: "Women beware! The souls of men are priceless things. The number of souls of women lost through the perfidy of men does not begin to compare with the number of men's souls cast frivolously into the eternal, hopeless darkness of the bottomless pit, by the capricious faithlessness of women.

"Not the outcast creatures of the street, but the women to whom we daily doff our hat—the women that grace our salons—the fond mothers, the loving wives. Like Delilah, they captivate him with their smiles, enslave him with their eyes, intoxicate him with a pressure of the hand, and make him lose his senses through a kiss. And all this only to surrender to his enemies, despair and recklessness, that quickly drive him to the torments of Hades."

He spoke directly at her and she felt it, and when mass was over she had to be driven home, for her husband saw she was ill.

For a week that sermon was in everyone's mouth, and afterwards it was forgotten, for the next Sunday he preached one stronger and more eloquent. This time his text was: "And of Jezebel also spake the Lord, saying the dogs shall eat Jezebel by the wall of Jezreel." He saw that Madame de Bergère was not there, and he did not care, for he knew that people would tell her about it.

Thus he kept on for a month, when a celebrated Franciscan took his place. Every Sunday the attendance in the church had increased, but when the Franciscan had preached twice it fell off again and Calixe came back to the pulpit.

After that first sermon Madame de Bergère had been attacked by nervous prostration, which seemed to grow worse while Calixe preached, and Dr. Malo ordered a change of air. The trip did her good, and in her absence Calixe paid a formal visit to her husband.

When she came back he was preaching again, and she began to grow worse. Though fearing to hear, she had a sort of fatal desire to know what he said, and always managed to find someone among her many visitors that was only too glad to talk about the magnificent sermons of the young preacher, who kept himself so quiet and secluded. She knew they were meant for her alone, and she became no better.

In the meantime Calixe's fame grew. The women idolised and the men admired him. Laframboise *père* was pleased. He was aware also that his daughter was ill, but the duties of the Legislative Councillor are many and heavy, and he had given her husband the address of the best doctor in town.

One day, however, there was straw in front of the fine house in the Rue Ste. Marie, and the bell had been taken off. Madame de Bergère was dangerously ill. She had been delirious, and in her delirium she had repeated parts of the Bible over and over again. Sometimes she had mumbled about an oath and about someone that was coming to kill her. But they had only given her a soothing drink and waited for the doctor. The Legislative Councillor had for the moment become the father again and hovered anxiously about the sick-room. In the evening Dr. Malo put in an appearance. He was an advanced sort of a physician. He did not feel her pulse, but took out a little thermometer and put it into her mouth. Then he

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took it out again, looked at it, carefully wiped it with his pocket-handkerchief and replaced it in his leather étui. Everything was still in the room except the beautiful woman in the bed, who, half-unconscious, moved about recklessly.

The doctor spoke. "This is the crisis," he said.

"Will she live?" father and husband asked as with one subdued voice.

"She may," said the doctor; "she is young and strong."

"Better send for a priest," murmured the nun that acted as nurse.

The father looked at the doctor.

"I would not advise it," said Dr. Malo, in reply to the look. "The excitement might rob her of her only chance of life. I do not look for her death so soon as to prevent that being done later on." Doctor Malo was a good Christian as doctors go nowadays, and a good churchman; but he believed a live Catholic worth a thousand dead ones.

"But suppose she were to die," whispered the nun again.

"It would be horrible." The husband seemed to side with the doctor, but the Legislative Councillor asserted himself again over the father. It would be horrible. It would surely wreck his prospects. "We must be prepared for the worst," he said. "Let us have a priest by all means. Send for Calixe."

Dr. Malo shrugged his shoulders and walked into the next room. He had done all he could do. They were good clients and could afford to await developments. Had they asked his opinion then, he would have made a wager of a hundred to one that she was going to die.

Calixe was sent for! When the message reached him he said nothing, but put on his hat and coat, gave the host in its black bag to the messenger to carry, and went out.

They had washed her hands and feet for the anointment and were just preparing a little table near the bed, when the door creaked and Calixe entered. He had left his hat and coat in the hall. His face was terribly pale, and his hair seemed twice as black as usual. As he approached the bed firmly and solemnly the sick woman looked up. The noise of the door opening must have roused her from her stupor. As she saw the young priest approaching, she threw up her arms as if to ward him off. "Take him away," she cried, "take him away. He has come to kill me," and she fell back on her pillows. Calixe paused, trembling from head to foot, but it was only a momentary tremor. Dr. Malo rushed out of the next room past him to the bed. He regarded her critically.

"She is going to die," he said; "I can do nothing more," and he left the house.

Calixe, paler than before, administered the last sacrament.

It is a grandly solemn ceremony in the abstract. To me it has always appeared horrible in reality. It seems like the irrevocable avowal that all hope is gone, the signing of the death-warrant, the preparation of a condemned prisoner for the scaffold.

Three days afterwards the interior of the church of Nôtre Dame de Lourdes was hung with yellow and black. Calixe officiated at the service of the dead.

The next afternoon he walked into my house and told my housekeeper he was going to dine with me. He hung his hat and coat in the hall and then began to unbutton his soutane, and would have taken that off also if she had not stopped him.

"All right," he said, and went into the parlour to look at the flowers. The housekeeper was afraid of her life, but fortunately I came home soon after. She told me of his strange actions, and I went into the parlour. When I shook hands with him, he said: "I am hungry and want some dinner." As it was about ready we sat down, and though he would not take anything but bread-and-water, he talked very sensibly. Once he stopped.

"I want that dinner all over again," he said, "and I want to begin with chicken soup." I asked him to wait until supper time, as the cook was very busy, and he said: "All right, I will take a bath instead." That settled it. I sent the girl for Dr. Malo. When he arrived, he looked at Calixe and made a motion with his lips that meant "Crazy!" As he went up to my friend, Calixe warned him off, and said, like a man that tells you that a door is newly painted:

"Take care. I am the man who kills."

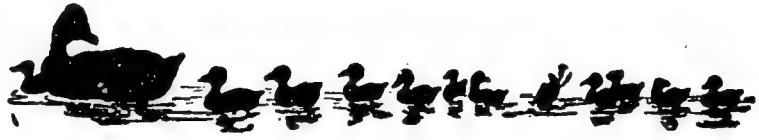
That remained his *idée fixe* all through his stay at the asylum. I was about the only one he allowed near him.

One day when I visited him he took me aside. "When I am dead and buried," he said, pointing to the floor, "I don't want people to come near me, I might hurt them. Put a stone over me, and cut on the stone in black letters, '*L'homme qui tue*'; it will be a warning."

He has been dead seven years.

The Vicomte de Bergère, after having lost half his fortune in the beetroot sugar industry, has married again. At least, Senator Laframboise, with whom I dined yesterday, told me so.

PETER PARR.



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A TALE OF OLD FRANCE.

By ***MARY FERMOR.***

SUMMARY.

Amaury Montruel, a knight, and Mahmoud-el-Reis, a Saracen, meet on the road to Paris. The former's mission is to kill the Queen of France; the latter's to kill the King. At the same time two children, Eric and Eve, are on their way to Paris to aid the Queen, and overhear the conversation of these two horsemen. Shortly afterwards a knight and his page give the children a lift on the road, and, on arriving at Paris, place them under the care of the Freemasons. Maître Samson, Montruel's secretary, tries to induce Tristan de Pamiers, king of the law students, to raise a rebellion in favour of Agnes de Méranie against Philip's consort, Queen Ingeburge. Albret, the King's page, takes Eve, *alias* Little Adam, to the King, who gives her permission to visit Ingeburge in her captivity in the Abbey St. Martin. Meanwhile Agnes de Méranie pays a visit to Notre Dame with Amaury Montruel, and stills the ominous cries of the people by distributing among them her paste jewels. In the cathedral she meets Mahmoud-el-Reis, who is carving a figure of the Virgin, and tries to win his regard by presenting him with pearls, which he crushes under his feet when she has gone. Returning from the visit to the cathedral, the members of the Royal party are intercepted by the Free-Lances, but are finally allowed to go on their way. Thinking this wild crew may be of future use to her, Agnes de Méranie determines to enlist the sympathies of their leader, Antoine Cadocu. To accomplish her object she visits him the same evening, accompanied by Montruel, in the low tavern in which he and his followers hold their nightly revels. She is very rudely treated, and returns with Montruel without having attained her object of enlisting the sympathies of Cadocu. Montruel's secretary, Samson, hints to the King that Agnes has been seen out late at night, and, although he confirms his suspicions, he does not allow Agnes to suspect his knowledge. During the sitting of a council appointed by the Pope to decide which of the King's two wives is his lawful consort, Montruel visits Mahmoud-el-Reis to urge him to fulfil his promise to murder Ingeburge without delay. In order to gain access to the Queen's presence, the two men arrange that Mahmoud shall feign sickness and be taken to the hospital attached to the Abbey, where the Queen is confined.

CHAPTER XIII.

A Patient for Prior Anselm.

Paris continued in a state of wild excitement during the first day of the great Ecclesiastical Council, and the crowds increased rather than diminished as the day wore on. Everyone thronged to the Palace Square, and there were many who had travelled all night from their country homes in order to glean the earliest intelligence of the all-important verdict.

The vast crowd waited patiently through the long weary hours, whose flight was only marked by the chiming bells from the neighbouring belfries, and still the great door remained closed. Human nature does not alter very much, and there were then, as there are to-day, fertile brains ready to divert the mob and gain a fleeting glory for themselves by the manufacture of startling items of information as to what was going on behind those closed doors. These romancers coloured their pictures according to their own fancy, but in no case was a single detail wanting as to the exact nature of those secret proceedings. The very words spoken in the recesses of the Council Chamber were repeated glibly by those who had never been within a hundred yards of the Palace steps. Some said the King had defied the Holy Father, and bidden his minions do their worst. Others, that the craven churchmen had been terrorized by the King's valiant body-guard; while the more pacific newsmongers had described Philip Augustus kneeling humbly before the assembled prelates, and assuring them of his penitent resolve to abide by the decision of Holy Church, whatever it should cost him. So the tongues wagged, and the crowd listened more or less incredulously, amused, horrified, incensed, as the case might be; but one and all deeply interested.

So absorbing were these contradictory and ever-recurring reports, that the crowd had little time to notice the fact that a litter was being carried, with considerable difficulty, through the thronged streets by four masons, followed by a knight on horseback, who seemed to direct their movements.

Those who recognised Amaury Montruel in the horseman suspected foul play as a matter of course; but it seemed only too probable that the litter contained some poor man who had fallen from the scaffolding of Nôtre Dame. One circumstance, however, would certainly have attracted attention had the lookers-on been less preoccupied, and that was the fact that, whenever the bearers prepared to halt before the door of a monastery or lazare-house, the knight motioned them to proceed, saying peremptorily:

"I will stop you at the right time and place."

The last orders of Jean Cador had been fulfilled to the letter. Montruel had called the first masons he could find, and had asked four of them to assist him. Three of the men shook their heads gravely on entering the shed where lay the apparently lifeless form of the famous sculptor.

"It's no good taking him to a hospital," said one of them; "the poor chap wants a coffin, not a bed, to lie in."

The fourth man knelt down beside the body and gazed at it with an agonised expression of doubt and fear upon his face, but he rose without saying a word, and was the first to bring a stretcher in obedience to Montruel's order.

When they were once fairly on the way, the three men relapsed into that subdued state of semi-indifferent sorrow which marks those who are brought face to face with a tragic occurrence that does not personally concern them, but the fourth bearer was still pale, and his eyes wandered restlessly through the crowd, as if seeking one whom they could

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not find. He looked like a man oppressed by a weighty secret which he yearned to confide to one who was not forthcoming.

Just before they reached the densest part of the crowd near the Palace, where the chattering groups were excitedly repeating the latest rumour to each other and jostling shoulder to shoulder in good-humoured idleness, this pale youth with the strained, anxious look in his eyes, caught sight of a white-haired old man, standing on the outskirts of the crowd, listening to the gossip.

The young man's face cleared and he called out.

"Christian, *mon père* Christian, come here a minute!" The old man turned round at the evidently familiar voice, and came towards the litter. Amaury Montruel saw the greeting, though he was too far off to catch the words, and felt instinctively that danger threatened his plans. He tried to spur his horse forward so as to intercept the meeting, but the throng was too great, and he only arrived in time to see the old man disappear in the crowd.

The young man had whispered hurriedly to his friend:

"The man in this litter is going to assassinate Queen Angel!" but as the words were spoken in the Norse tongue they conveyed no meaning to the bystanders.

This fourth bearer was Eric, the Dane, who had come from his northern home to save the life of Queen Ingeburge. He had never forgotten Imila's prophecy, nor the strange events of the night he and his sister had arrived in Paris. Ever since he had begun work at Nôtre Dame he had set a strict watch on the man so clearly defined by the prophecy, the man who bore the dual character of the Moslem, Mahmoud-el-Reis, and the Christian sculptor, Jean Cador, employed to carve the statue of the Holy Virgin.

The noise which had caused Montruel to rush to the window, during the last conversation with the Syrian that morning, had been made by Eric, who had climbed up the scaffolding, and was crouching under the window, so that he had heard every word spoken by the two men inside the shed. At the name of his beloved princess he had started so violently as to loosen a small piece of stone with his foot, and he had only just time to slide down one of the poles before Montruel's head was thrust out of the window above him.

Long and earnestly did the two men talk.

The awful knowledge that he now possessed stunned him, for his will was better than his brain, and he felt powerless to act alone in this terrible emergency. He would have given ten years of his life to have had Eve beside him, for her quick wit and ready intelligence had helped them out of many a dilemma on their memorable journey. It was she who had cheered, consoled, and planned, while he bore the physical discomforts so far as he could in her stead. She had the mind, he had the muscle.

It was now the eighth day since she had been taken away from him. Every moment he could spare from his work had been spent in anxious and, so far, fruitless search for some trace of her whereabouts, but he had not obtained the slightest clue to her fate, and even had failed to come across the page Albret, who alone could have given him tidings. His heart had been daily growing heavier with the protracted suspense, and his fears for her safety were becoming more and more confirmed as no word of her reached him.

Now, when death seemed hanging over the head of the one they were both pledged to serve, his longing for his sister became almost unbearable.

When they had borne the litter over the great bridge which led to the palace, they made no halt till they reached the Porte-aux-Peintres, where Montruel, raising his visor, bade the guards open "In the King's name."

Montruel, raising his visor, bade the guards open "In the King's name."

As soon as they were outside the walls, he rode ahead, and stopping before the heavy gate of the Abbey St. Martin, rang the great bell, and demanded audience with the Prior.

When Anselm came out, his haughty visitor requested that a private cell should be given to the celebrated sculptor, Maître Jean Cador, who had had the misfortune to be taken ill while carving the image of the Holy Virgin. It was the King's pleasure that the sick man should be tended in the Abbey St. Martin.

The venerable Prior bowed in acquiescence, and calling four of the lay brethren, bade them take the litter into the hospital.

Montruel waited till the doors had closed upon Mahmoud-el-Reis, and then, setting spurs to his horse, galloped back to the city.

Three of the bearers returned, unthinkingly, to their work at Nôtre Dame, wondering what ailed the man they had carried to the Abbey, but the dark-skinned sculptor was not popular among his fellow-craftsmen, and they soon dismissed the matter from their minds.

Eric followed them for a few yards, then lagged behind, and, as he saw them walk on, unmindful of his movements, he sat down behind a thick bush and waited till old Christian should have made his way out of the city, as arranged between them.

Long and earnestly did the two men talk and consider how to avert this terrible fate from the fair Ingeburge, who was now under the same roof as the man who had sworn to take her life, while her two faithful friends were almost within sound of her voice, yet powerless to save her.

The afternoon wore on, and as the last rays of the setting sun were glancing across the road, they were also struggling to penetrate the narrow cell where Mahmoud-el-Reis lay in his death-like stupor. The white-washed walls were bare, save for a crucifix that hung over the small *prie dieu* at the foot of the pallet-bed, which, with a low, wooden stool, completed the furniture of the tiny room.

His face was a shade paler than usual, and had a deathly hue, in spite of the bronze tone of the skin; his eyes were closed, his sinewy, supple limbs were rigid and motionless.

By his side sat an old monk, with a good-natured, expressionless face, who held in his limp, nerveless hands a rosary, over which he mechanically mumbled the Office, taking no notice of the sick man in his charge. To the good brother's eyes the Syrian was as good as dead, so, as he could do nothing to help the body, he was doing his best, in his own lazy way, to pave an entrance into the future state for the soul that must soon leave its earthly tenement.

The patient had not moved or given the least sign of life since he had been carried in that morning; and the old monk's rosary was a long one, so every now and then he dozed over his prayers in that silent cell, and woke up again refreshed, to find all as it had been an hour ago. If anyone could have gone in, unperceived, during one of these little naps, he would have been forcibly struck by the contrast between the two faces in repose before him.

The good monk was plump and ruddy, with shaven tonsure and three well-developed chins. His face spoke of an amiable character weakened by habitual indolence, and, even if one could swear that he had never done much good in the world, it was equally certain he had never, consciously, done any harm.

The face on the pillow, with its sharply-defined features, its energy, its pride and its passion, was that of a man whose very life was action, and whose force was wielded for good or ill with irresistible intensity.

The life of the monk had been as a dreamless sleep, untroubled by remorse, ungilded by love, unmoved by aspiration.

That of the Moslem had been as a whirlwind, a tempest, in which every passion had played its part, and the dusky pallor of his cheek seemed a mystic revelation of the volcano that slumbered in his heart.

A ray of sunlight fell upon the two faces, and with its warmth there appeared a healthier glow on the Syrian's forehead—signs of returning consciousness gradually developed, and a faint smile played for a second on the discoloured lips.

The monk's rubicund face became yet more rosy in the light, and he slept on peacefully, like a child, with his white, flaccid hands folded over the long rosary, and his round head cushioned on the three chins.

At last there was a slight quiver in the Syrian's eyelids, and they were slowly raised till the eyes were half-open; but the glance that came from beneath them was weak and weary, not to be recognised as the bright, flashing eagle-eyes of Mahmoud-el-Reis. This man never did anything by halves, and the potion he had swallowed had not only given him the appearance of illness, but had produced symptoms of the gravest character.

The cleverest physician that even modern medical science could produce would have unhesitatingly declared Mahmoud's life to be in the greatest danger.

His swoon had lasted many hours, and now that he was regaining his faculties his physical exhaustion was such as to prevent him from using them. For the flame of life was flickering very low in the breast of Mahmoud-el-Reis at this moment.

Some minutes elapsed before the half-open eyes could distinguish any object in his strange surroundings, and a terrible fear seized him.

"Am I blind?" he thought, "or is it the dead of night that makes all look so black?"

He tried to raise his hand to sweep away, if might be, the mist which obscured his eyes; but the arm refused to obey the brain—it lay beside him as a useless thing over which he had no control.

The tired eye-lids drooped again, and he thought, almost with indifference, so great was his weakness:

"The dose was strong. Allah grant that it may not have been too strong!"

CHAPTER XIV.

The Assassin's Nurse.

Ten minutes or more elapsed before Mahmoud-el-Reis opened his eyes again. It never occurred to him to ask for help; the man was self-reliant even in his weakness; moreover, he felt that the deadly effects of the drug were passing off, and his superb constitution was asserting itself in his favour. He gradually became able to distinguish the form of the sleeping monk sitting facing him at his bedside, and with the return of power came also the memory of his mission. He half raised himself on his elbow, and so brought his eyes upon a level with the face of his unconscious companion. After a close scrutiny of the good man's features, the Syrian shook his head, sank back exhausted on the pillow, and thought within himself:

"I shall get nothing out of that man! He has no passions to appeal to!"

The slight exertion caused a return of faintness, all became dark again before his eyes, and he lapsed into a heavy, dreamless sleep. Brother Martin woke with a start and sprang to his feet as quickly as his weight and years would allow of. It seemed to him that he had heard a sound like the creaking of a bedstead in his dreams, and, as he crossed himself piously, he looked towards the silent figure and recognised that the posture had been changed.

"Holy Saints protect us! The dead man has moved!"

His trembling fingers sought in vain for the rosary which had fallen to the ground; his teeth chattered, his blood ran cold, and to his terrified mind the cell seemed peopled with ghostly visitants. He dare not leave his post; he was too paralysed to call for help, too bewildered even to pray. To his infinite relief, however, steps and voices were heard in the corridor, and in another moment the door opened to admit the Prior, followed by a closely-veiled woman.

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"You have done enough for to-day, Brother Martin," said Anselm kindly. "Go and take your well-earned rest."

Instead of obeying the old monk stood, as if dazed, fumbling for his rosary.

"Go in peace, my brother!" repeated the Prior.

"My father," stammered Martin, "I have committed the deadly sin of sloth, I fell asleep over my Office, I neglected my charge, and when I woke I thought the dead had moved!"

"The dead?" exclaimed the Prior and his companion in one breath, and the former bent down to feel if the Syrian's pulse still beat.

"Go, my brother, and sin no more, God will pardon thine offence, for thou art old and weak."

Brother Martin found his rosary at last, and resumed his mumbled prayers as he slowly made his way out of the cell. When the last sound of his heavy footsteps had died away the Prior led the veiled figure to the low stool whereon the monk had slumbered and prayed, and, in a low tone, resumed an evidently interrupted narrative.

"Yes, my dear daughter, the King has obeyed the command of Holy Church and appeared this morning before the Council appointed by His Holiness to enquire into this matter of his marriage. One who was there told me that his Majesty comported himself as became a Christian monarch."

"May God be with him and guide him now and ever;" prayed the veiled figure in a voice of emotion.

"The Council has not arrived at a decision, but it is easy to foretell that it will be in your favour. Justice will at last be done to you, my dear daughter. You, and you alone, will be Queen of France!"

The old monk stood, as if dazed, fumbling for his rosary.

Ingeburge raised her veil, and the tears gathered in her eyes as she murmured:

"Queen of France! Say rather, the wife of Philip Augustus! The throne has no charms for me save when shared with my lord and King."

Prior Anselm smiled wonderingly. He could not fathom the love of this gentle heart, which no cruelty or neglect had been able to crush.

"You remember, my daughter, that you asked permission to help in nursing our poor sick folk, and for a whole week I have hesitated to fulfil my promise to you, but, when this man was brought here by the King's command——"

"By the King's command?" interrupted Ingeburge.

"I said to myself," quietly pursued the Prior, "that he should be the first patient to be tended by the Queen. God be with you, my daughter!" and after a few whispered injunctions Anselm quitted the cell.

The sun set, the after-glow faded, and evening deepened into night. The narrow cell was in darkness, save for a pale ray of moonlight which cast a shadowy haze over the figure of the sick man, who still slept on while the white-robed Queen knelt beneath the Crucifix.

At last there came a sigh out of the ghostly silence, and before Ingeburge could rise from her knees, a faint voice cried:

"Am I alone?"

Mahmoud-el-Reis thought he was dreaming, when, instead of the monotonous drone of the old monk, he heard the sweetest tones that had fallen on his ear for many a long day, answer gently:

"No, my brother, you are not alone. There is one here who watches over you and prays for you."

The words seemed to give fresh life to his weak spirit, and he thought: "If I were a thousand leagues from here, in the scented forests where the rose trees hang their flower-laden branches over the ancient bed of a mountain torrent, I should say: 'I have heard the voice of Dilah, my beloved!'"

His long sleep had strengthened and refreshed him, so that he could now raise himself in bed with comparative ease. His eyes sought eagerly to pierce the darkness and look upon the owner of this sweet voice.

"Where are you?" he asked.

There was no answer, but he heard the friction of flint and steel and saw one or two sparks emitted. Then came silence and darkness again. She was evidently a novice and unskilled in such matters.

"Give it to me," he said. "My chest burns like fire and my throat is parched. I could bear it better if I might see the light."

What he really wanted was to see the face of the woman who had spoken so gently to him. He was not a man to waste time, and he said to Montruel that morning: "If there are only men about the Queen it may take me a day, but if there is one woman, I can do it in an hour."

He held out his hand, and heard a light step cross the cell, then felt the contact of cool, soft fingers with his own fevered ones, which tried to press the little hand in his, but it escaped him and he only held the flint and steel.

In a few seconds the lamp which hung above the bed was lighted, and the Syrian saw the slight, youthful form of a woman dressed in white, whose features were concealed by a long gauze veil.

Ingeburge watched with deep interest the awakening faculties of this strange man who had laid so long in his deathlike sleep. His dark, piercing eyes had regained much

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of their wonted brilliancy, and were fixed upon her with an intensity which both fascinated and repelled her. She felt a strange power in this man, who was so different from any she had ever seen before, even while his bodily weakness appealed to her womanly sympathy. Mindful of her self-chosen task, she poured the contents of a small phial into a cup which stood beside his pillow and handed it to him.

He pushed it away with a gesture of repugnance, saying:

"Water! give me a draught of cold, pure water!"

"But this is a healthful remedy," she protested gently.

Mahmoud was still looking at her with his glittering eyes, now brightened by returning fever and excitement, and his voice sounded low and strange as he asked:

"How long have Christian maidens hidden their faces like the slaves of the East?"

"Drink this cooling draught, my brother," was the only

She shrank from the Syrian.

response; but the voice sounded as if the speaker was smiling.

He refused the drug, however, and would drink only cool water. As he handed her back the cup all signs of remaining weakness vanished as if by a miracle.

"Thank you, maiden," he said, in a voice so deep and melodious that it was to Ingeburge as if someone else must have entered the cell. She started, and took the empty cup he was holding out to her. He then turned so that the light did not fall upon his own features, and prepared for conquest.

"Maiden," he began gently, "you are kind and helpful, and the Almighty ever rewards mercy and virtue. The sacred poets say that the Prophet gave the rich dates of Aroen to Sidda, the wife of Moses, in return for a cup of water. I am Jean Cador, the carver of images, to whom princes speak with deference. The chief of your priests in Paris will pay me for my statue with its weight in gold. I am willing to share that gold with you, maiden. What think you?"

Ingeburge made him no answer, not because she was offended at his offer, but because she was trying to remember when and where she had heard the name of Jean Cador. It seemed familiar, and after a time it dawned upon her that Eve had mentioned it in her long story of men and things, but no clear idea was connected with it in the Queen's mind.

"Do you not care to be rich, maiden?" persisted the Syrian, turning his head so as to try and see her face in the light of the lamp.

She was still very young, and had her share of that curiosity with which her sex is accredited, so, as this adventure appeared interesting, she determined to lead the stranger on to say more.

"Oh, yes, my brother. I should like to be rich, of course!"

Mahmoud-el-Reis began to think that an hour would be too long to win this woman, and he continued eloquently:

"Riches, riches are like the costly varnish that a cunning painter puts upon his work to bring out the depth and wealth of his colouring—riches can procure that which can enhance even beauty itself!"

"With riches, my brother, one can comfort many sorrows and heal many wounds," said Ingeburge gently.

The Moslem stopped, and for a moment he hesitated before spreading anew the net he had prepared to catch this young girl. A feeling of respect for her simple kindliness, for her purity, her innocence, chained his tongue for a while, but he might not go back, so he changed his tactics; for human nature can be led astray by the hope of doing good as well as by the grosser forms of evil.

"And there is so much suffering in the world," he resumed; "so many who languish in want and misery in this great city of Paris! Thank God, my gifts would not be wasted on selfish pleasures! Instead of decking your brow with costly jewels you would adorn your soul with deeds of mercy."

Ingeburge was still abstracted, struggling to remember what Eve had told her about this Jean Cador, for he seemed to have a kindly heart, though he spoke like one who was in ignorance of Christian faith and practice.

"Did you think, my brother, that you would find women in this holy retreat who were addicted to the vanities of this world?"

Mahmoud felt he was losing time, so he drew from his vest a richly-embroidered silk purse full of gold, and held it out to her, quite expecting to see some sign of a desire to possess the handsome gift, in spite of her pious words. She was too absorbed in her own tormenting thoughts to take much notice of it, and, cynic as he was, he attributed her indifference to dissimulation. Changing his tone, he said:

"I have heard that the King's first wife is confined in this Abbey; is it so, maiden?"

"Yes, they have told you truly," replied Ingeburge with now fully awakened interest.

"Do you happen to know anything of her?"

"Oh, yes, I know her."

"And perhaps you love her?"

"Yes, I—love—her," was the uncertain answer, for it had just flashed across Ingeburge's mind that the name of Jean Cador was coupled with another of fearful significance.

She shrank from the Syrian, as if the purse he still held out to her had been a poisoned dagger, and with faltering voice and strained eyes she cried:

"You have another name?"

"Yes, I have," was the calm reply.

Ingeburge's knees gave way beneath her, and a deadly fear seized her heart.

"God in Heaven! if this is my last hour, have pity on Thy child, and pardon my sinful soul!"

She believed that Jean Cador was the same as Mahmoud-el-Reis, who had come to Paris to kill the Queen, and this mixture of truth and error had brought yet another thought, which pierced her heart with unspeakable anguish—he had been sent by the King.

(To be continued.)

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THE TOY DOG.

THERE is nothing so pathetic as a little stuffed canton flannel dog, standing on a mantel where it was put by a little hand now quiet in the grave. The wee toddler is dead and gone, but still the little toy dog keeps watch day by day for the coming of its baby master. It seems to gaze out of its shoe-button eyes with a longing for its little playmate, and the heart-sick parents gently dust the treasured toy and sigh for the bright-eyed lad who will no more try to pat the sawdust stuffing out of the home-made pup with a tin horn. But if the baby boy continues to eat three meals a day as usual, the little toy dog is not such a pathetic animal.

My boy shows no signs of quick consumption, appendicitis, or even colic. I don't believe he would die by special request. He seems destined to live to be as great and good as his father one of these days.

When my wife constructed the canton flannel dog, we viewed it with unalloyed satisfaction. It was a bright-red dog of a hitherto unknown breed. It was plumper in the legs than any dog I had ever seen. In fact, it seemed to have started with the idea of being a particularly robust elephant, then humped itself into a camel, and ended by donning a snout like a hog.

When we gave it to our boy on Christmas morning with the somewhat untruthful assertion that it had been left by Santa Claus, it required a great deal of persuasion to make the boy believe it was a dog. He had come to know a dog by name when he saw one, and he was sceptical. I cannot blame him. Even to this day I wonder at the boundless faith he evinced when he at last accepted his mother's assertion that it was "a nice 'ittle doggie." If she had told him it was a nice 'ittle hippopotamus, or a nice 'ittle Agathaumas sphenocerus, reconstructed from remains found in the cretaceous deposits, his faith would have been less remarkable.

As it was, he folded the thing to his youthful bosom, and repeated the statement that it was a "nice 'ittle doggie." It was his first lie.

Then he played with it. With a glad cry he threw it on to the piano, and knocked a costly vase I had given my wife into ten thousand pieces. For a moment he mourned for the dog, and then he began eating sections of vase under the impressions that they were French confections. It took the combined efforts of my wife and two doctors to extract the sections of vase from our boy's throat. Then we gave him a picture book, and put the dog safely away on the mantelpiece.

Shortly after we heard the eight day clock fall to the floor with a crash. Also fell: two Dresden china shepherds, a glass jar containing chrysanthemums, a bronze Mercury, and several pieces of bric-a-brac that were broken into such small fragments that they were beyond identification. But our boy had the red dog, and he was happy.

"Me dot nice 'ittle doggie," he remarked calmly.

After that we removed everything breakable, and let our boy and the dog do their worst. Their worst was two panes of glass.

That evening when the boy was tucked in his little bed I calculated the damage he and his pet were responsible for, and I was ready to write something pathetic about canton flannel dogs. But I did not. Instead, I read a few chapters in a book my wife had given me. Then we were ready for bed.

I took the water jug, and started up stairs followed by my wife bearing the lamp. It was a big lamp, and she needed both hands to carry it. When I reached the step next the last my foot alighted squarely on something soft and rolly. It was the red dog. First I said something, and then I did a back somersault with great rapidity and considerable abandonment. On my way down I met my wife coming up. She seemed to change her mind suddenly, and decided to go down with me. It was very kind and thoughtful of her, but I really did not appreciate the kindness of her act when she carelessly hit me on the head with the lamp. Afterwards she claimed that it was I who hit her on the head with the water jug. It is still an unsettled question.

When we reached the bottom she was sitting on my head with the lamp jammed into my neck, down which the oil was running in a warm stream.

We were both badly damaged, but when we recovered sufficient sense to see clearly, we beheld the red dog smiling down upon us from the step next to the top.

Without a word I crawled up the stairs, and grasping that unearthly canine by the head I ripped it open from stem to stern with my knife, while his sawdust filler trickled out upon the stair.

The dog had an existence of one day, and he doesn't stand on the mantel. He is a dead dog, and before I let my boy have another such dangerous beast I would rather present him with a full-blooded bull dog, for that style of dog can at least be chained to the leg of the piano. Don't talk to me about little toy dogs and pathos. If you must read tales of stuffed pups and departed kids, please wait until the scent of embrocation disappears from the atmosphere of our humble home.

E. S.

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Albert G. Pope, 64 Constance Street, Silvertown, E. "The Soul of Lilith." By Marie Corelli. 6s.

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W. Rees, 16 Alexandra Road, Broadstairs. "The Moonstone." By Wilkie Collins. 3s. 6d.

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Stories of the Stock Exchange.

3 The Great Conspiracy

Unearthed and Re-Edited by Robert Machray.

There was sore discontent in the City. Something like settled gloom rested upon the great majority of the brokers, jobbers, and other operators on 'Change.

And yet there was no specially bad news. There was no rumour current at the moment of any tremendous defeat at the hands of Napoleon, although there were tales of dark doings in Spain. But it was undoubtedly the case that there was something ominous, something threatening, something even deadly in the air of the Stock Exchange.

There was nothing on the surface, however, that seemed to account for it. As a matter of fact, a great transaction had just been completed with extraordinary success. The Government had come into the market by means of its accredited agents, and had borrowed a large sum with as much ease as one man might have in borrowing half-a-crown from another. In former years, and these not so long ago, the raising of a loan, even with the nation as security, would have been a matter for long and protracted negotiation.

Indeed, there were men who had made it their chief business to raise difficulties, real or imaginary, in the way of the Government on such occasions. In other words, they would have endeavoured to have made the nation pay as high a price as possible for the money it borrowed. The result of these tactics was that there were plenty of splendid pickings for all and sundry on the Stock Exchange.

Here was a change indeed. For, with the exception of two or three people, no one had benefited by the Government loan which had been placed on the market. True, the Treasury had obtained the supplies it required both cheaply and quickly, and the country, as a whole, was so much the better for it.

What had that to do with the thing, asked the disgusted brokers. What were the Government or the country, forsooth, but pieces—big pieces, of course, but still pieces—on the board of the great game played week in, week out, of speculation? And if this were so, why should not everybody have a hand in it? Why should it be reserved for a select few?

So the situation was summed up by Mr. Joel Rosenthal, as he sat in a room in the "City of London Tavern." He was the centre of a little group of men, upon whose faces were looks of determination, of bitter resentment, and even of fierceness. They were brokers, jobbers, dealers, intermediaries of one sort or another between those who bought and those who sold on the Stock Exchange.

It was after business hours, and on the table in front of them stood glasses of punch, which, however, appeared to have been touched but little, so earnest and absorbing had been their conversation. Now, as that May day of 1810 drew to its close, and the candles were lit by the attentive Perkins, who had so long been head-waiter at the well-known inn, they drew their seats more closely together, and their talk proceeded in somewhat stealthy whisperings.

"It's a shame, an infernal shame! that's what it is," said one.

"'Tis more than a shame," said Rosenthal. "'Tis taking the bread out of all our mouths, and putting it into the mouth of a single man. If it continues we shall not be able to live. There will be nothing

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left for us to do. There must be a change, and that speedily, or we shall all starve."

"Aye, but what is to be done?" asked a third. "He has grown so great, he has waxed so fat, he has become so monstrous rich, that he carries everything before him."

"He must be put an end to somehow," said Rosenthal.

Here one of the party looked at the last speaker somewhat strangely across the table.

"Yet everybody knows that you, yourself, are related to him. Will he do nothing for you?" he asked.

these Goldsmids came over from Holland to London some forty years ago. He was not exactly a rich man when he began business, but he was of that nature to which money-making is an instinct. He was of the sort who grow rich where most others would have remained poor. To him were born sons and daughters—the sons inherited his ability in finance. His daughters married diamond merchants, but the sons—this one amongst them, inherited something more than their father's skill in business, something more than the money which he left them."

Rosenthal stopped—impressively, as one about to make a startling statement. Those who listened to

The situation was summed up by Mr. Joel Rosenthal, as he sat in a room in the "City of London Tavern."

"No, confound him," said Rosenthal. "I hate him with all my heart, and I, for one, would be prepared to do anything almost to bring him to ruin."

"But how? It will be no slight affair, no ordinary combination that will bring *that* about."

"I think it can be done. His firm has no friends left on the Stock Exchange. He has purchased his success at everybody's expense. Just let the opportunity be given, and you shall see how his enemies will rejoice. Nay, I will tell you more than this."

He paused for a moment. Then, his gaze having swept slowly and almost solemnly round the table, he told them one of the strangest stories ever listened to by mortal ears.

"You all know, or have heard, that the father of

him wondered what could be coming. To them it seemed as if there was well-nigh nothing left for the Goldsmids to be possessed of, either by inheritance or by any other way.

"They inherited—a *curse*." Rosenthal's voice, sibilant, menacing, had a curious thrill in it.

The men whom he addressed were hard, unsentimental, incredulous.

"A curse!" said one, with a laugh. "A curse! his is the talk of children. Do you mean to say, Joel Rosenthal, that you believe in such stuff as that? A curse! Drivel!" and again he laughed harshly.

"I say 'tis no childish nonsense this. Do we not all know that there are things," replied Rosenthal, "that——. But listen first to my story. None of

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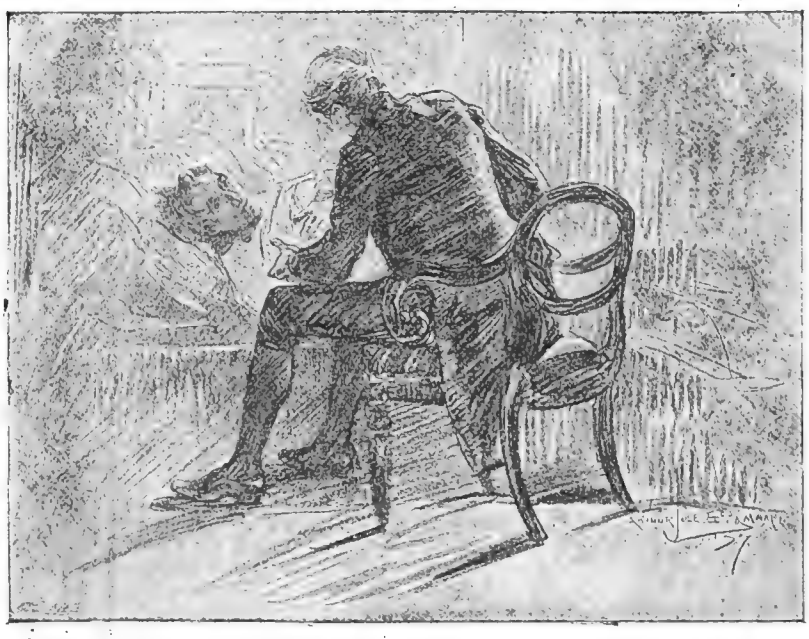
you perhaps knew Israel, the Wizard. *Wizard*—that's the nearest I can come to it in your tongue. In Hebrew we called him Baal Shem—a sooth-sayer, diviner, seer—a man who could foretell what was in the future."

Rosenthal's manner was that of one so convinced of the truth of what he was speaking about that the others forgot their unbelief for the moment, and were all attention.

"Israel was the greatest friend that Aaron Goldsmid had. They were the closest intimates. A great part of Aaron's success was no doubt due to the advice given him by the Baal Shem. But Israel had no spells which would prevent his own death, and in course of time he died. While he lay upon his death-bed he confided to Goldsmid a sealed package.

"He gave Aaron a message at the same time, even as he drew his last breath. It was to the effect that so long as that mysterious package was in the possession of the Goldsmid family they would have such prosperity as was beyond all dreams of avarice. 'A time will come,' said the dying man, 'when the package must be opened, wait for it. You will know the season by'—then the death rattle took him, choked him, and silenced him for ever."



"He gave Aaron a message at the same time, even as he drew his last breath."

There was another pause.

"What has all this to do with us? How can it help us to come by our rights, for such they are, and to overthrow this leviathan who swallows up everything?" asked one man, less moved than the others.

"I have not yet finished my story," said Rosenthal. "Aaron Goldsmid knew that the dying lips of the seer could not utter a falsehood, but the message he had left was incomplete. When was the time to arrive at which the package was to be opened? He had been told to wait for it, but till when? That weighed upon his mind so much that he became restless and troubled. Perhaps you will say that it was merely superstition, but he believed in what the wizard had said.

"Aaron Goldsmid died suddenly—that everybody knows. But it is not so generally known what was the manner of his death. It is known, however, in his own family, and by those who are connected with it. As time passed on, the mystery of the sealed package so worked upon him that he felt compelled at last to open it. Wrapping after wrapping was removed, until at length he came upon a single sheet of parchment, upon which were written in the sacred, almost forgotten characters of the oldest form of our language, that in which the law was given, a prophecy of what was to be.

"He who first broke these seals, graven with the device stamped on them by the ring of the Baal Shem, was to bring about his own fate by his very act. A mortal sickness was to seize upon him. How, why, I cannot tell. But Aaron Goldsmid died that day."

"A strange tale, sure enough," said he who had spoken before. "But of what use to us?"

"A true story; I know it is true," said another, a Jew like Rosenthal.

"Nor was that all," said Rosenthal. "Here I speak, however, of what I do not know for certain, but of what I have heard half-hinted with bated breath amongst ourselves. It is that the prophecy went on to say that the children of Aaron Goldsmid were to be cut off suddenly and unexpectedly when at the very height of their prosperity. Kings were to be their guests, and their state was to be that of princes. Yet in the midst of this golden time of theirs they were to wither away and perish.

"Now, what has already happened? Did not one son die mysteriously—cut off in the midst of his wealth and power? 'Twas said to be the gout, but 'twas by violence, though that is not the report.

"Abraham Goldsmid cannot forget what was said by the Baal Shem. What is written is written—there is no saying that is truer than that. Rich and powerful as he is, he carries about with him that canker at his heart. For years he has had everything his own way. There has been no check to the flow of his prosperity. But if there should be a change—don't you see—the mere recollection of that fatal prophecy will paralyse

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his nerves and palsy his brains. Then he does not forget how his brother perished."

When he had ceased speaking he looked carefully into each face to see what the effect of his words had been. One of them asked: "Is it true?"

"It is true—I know," again said the Jew who had given a similar testimony already.

"Yes, it is true; every word of it!" said Rosenthal. "You all know me, and the sort of man I am in business. I am no weakling to place belief in old wives' fables. But this is true.

"Let us look at the position of affairs," went on Rosenthal. "Is there a single member of the Stock Exchange who will not gladly help him on to his downfall? Let but the tide go against him ever so little, and there is not a mouth in the City that will not find breath enough to try to strand and wreck him upon the shore."

"But how to bring about that change?" asked one.

"I was going to add," continued Rosenthal, "it needs not so much as you might suppose, for that ever-present fear of his will prove his worst foe."

Then Rosenthal, who had evidently given the subject much consideration, outlined a scheme, bold and yet cunning, for the downfall of the House of Goldsmid.

It was discussed and adopted, each man pledging himself to work with a single eye to its success, and to endeavour by every possible means to get the co-operation of others. Thereupon they separated in a determined and hopeful mood.

During the time that this conversation had been going on, the old head-waiter, good Tom Perkins, had several times entered the room to see if further refreshments were required. Being by nature a bit of a gossip, like most waiters, and more privileged than most, he had managed to hear snatches of their talk. Being also a man much learned in human nature—as indeed is the case with those of his calling—he guessed not only from what he had heard, but also from what he saw, that there was mischief afoot.

As a general thing, Perkins would have said that it was no affair of his. "Gen'l'm'n in the City would be up to their tricks; 'twas their way," he had often told himself, for he knew very well that tricks, as he called them, were part of the game. But the name of Goldsmid, however, had reached his ears; that name made all the difference. He could never hear it uttered without having a certain moistness about his eyes.

And the way of it was this:

One day the world, so far as Perkins was concerned, had, to all intents and purposes, come to an end. He owed a debt he could not pay—'twas not much, being only a matter of £50 or so, but it was just as far beyond his means as if the sum involved had spelt millions. As he had been shining up the silver in the dining-room of the tavern, he had felt the bailiff's hand upon his shoulder.

He could not have felt worse if it had been the hand of death. He was arrested. What was to become of his wife and their five children! Prevailing upon the officer to let him wait at table during the mid-day meal, he fulfilled his duties with so melancholy an air that it attracted the attention of Abraham Goldsmid, who inquired what the matter was.

Goldsmid was a kindly soul, and Perkins, who waited on him daily, was a favourite of his. Bursting into tears, Perkins told him how he was placed.

"'Tain't for myself," said Tom, "but for my wife and the poor children at home. I don't know what on earth will become of them."

"How much is it, Tom?" asked Goldsmid.

"Fifty-five pounds," he replied.

"Tuts, tuts, man. I'll put that right for you."

And then the great banker had instantly drawn forth his cheque-book, and filled up an order for a hundred pounds, which he handed to Tom. No, Tom was never likely to forget that. Henceforth, the name of Goldsmid was sacred to him.

At length he came upon a single sheet of parchment.

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What was he to do? At least he might give a warning, the warning which would forearm. And the sooner the better—that was plain enough. So that evening Perkins went to the banker's house, but found he had gone to his country mansion at Roehampton, where a great banquet was being given. Urged by his spirit of gratitude, Tom procured a horse, which he mounted with fear and trembling, as he was no horseman, and set out along the Richmond Road. It was not, however, until far in the night that he was able to get speech with Goldsmid, and to tell him of what he more than suspected.

It had been a magnificent entertainment, graced by the presence of Royalty itself, and in every way worthy of the wealth and taste of a king of finance. Goldsmid was in high spirits, both on account of the success of his dinner-party and also because the King that very day had graciously given him a pardon for a Jew, a poor member of the synagogue, who had been condemned for forgery. He was in too benevolent a mood at the moment to think evil of anyone.

He listened good-humouredly enough as Tom unfolded his tale, and, while he thanked him for his thoughtfulness, was inclined to make light of it.

"You are a grateful fellow, Perkins," he said. "But your regard for me, I think, has led you to attach too much importance to what was after all perhaps a chance meeting. Whoever they were, I fear them not. As for plots and tricks and stratagems—there are always plenty of them on the Stock Exchange. And threatened men live long——." Then a sort of shadow passed over his face.

What was Goldsmid thinking of? Was it of that ghostly bequest of destiny, of which he was now the sole legatee? If so, he immediately shook the idea from him.

"I will bear in mind what you have done, Perkins," said he. "Nay, stop a minute." And, generous to a fault, he presented to the man a handful of guineas which he took from his pocket. Then he gave orders that Perkins should be given food and a place for the night, and so dismissed the man and the matter at the same instant.

And small wonder. For years past, the great financial firm of the Goldsmids had more than held their own in their rivalry for the Government loans with such people as the Couttses, the Grotes, the Curtises, and others of the principal magnates of the City. The chief cashier of the Bank of England was practically their partner. The Barings, then becoming pillars of a world-wide financial power, were their associates.

Yet if he had reflected a little longer, he might have remembered that they had few friends among the members of the Stock Exchange; how very few these friends were in number had as yet not been disclosed to him. In fact, his great prosperity had lulled him into a feeling of false security.

Now, in no department of affairs, can it be too much kept in mind that "eternal vigilance is the price of safety." This is especially true of the Stock Exchange. It was not many days before he found out that his vigilance had slept, and so experienced how precarious are the foundations of even a vast fortune when beat upon by the storms and tempests of Capel-court.

All through the summer of that year the storm had been gathering. It was now about to break. Rosenthal was the prime mover, and in him it possessed a spirit at once bold and resolute, cold as the grave and as pitiless. The unerring judgment of the man was shown by his selecting for the field of battle, as it were, the greatest single Government loan which had ever been placed upon the market at one time.

In May of that year, Mr. Perceval, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, had announced in his Budget speech to the House of Commons that a loan nominally of the amount of twelve millions sterling, but which with the premium came to fourteen millions sterling—the three per cents. in those days ranged between sixty and seventy—had been taken up by the firms of Goldsmid and Co. and Baring and Co.

In other words, Abraham Goldsmid, for he was the real principal, had contracted for the whole loan.

It was not, however, until far in the night that he was able to get speech with Goldsmid.

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Of course, it was his purpose to sell the Funds represented by this loan to the public through the Stock Exchange in the usual way at a considerable premium. If the operation were successful he would realise an immense profit. On former occasions in regard to other loans he had met with no difficulty in following a similar course, nor did he anticipate any other sequel now.

At the beginning certainly everything looked favourable enough.

The "Omnium"* towards the end of June, was quoted at a premium of one and one quarter per cent. In July, however, there was a sudden change.

In one of the purlieus of Fleet Street there had been written and printed a pamphlet which appeared to prove conclusively that the French, with that everlasting bogey of a Bonaparte at their head, were quietly and secretly taking all the gold out of the country. Few people would suspect, said the writer, that many a herring-boat was dispatched from the English coast with a cargo not of fish but of guineas.

This precious pamphlet was the first act of Rosenthal, and it was strangely and unexpectedly productive of results. The words of the pamphlet echoed throughout the country, and induced many of the real money holders to sell the Funds out of sheer fright that Britain might become bankrupt.

Taking immediate advantage of this opening, and with a view to increase its effects, he caused some of his associates to offer stock at 20 per cent. under the market-price if payment were made for it in gold.

Simultaneously with these proceedings, Rosenthal and his friends managed to procure from the collectors and receivers of the National revenue so large an amount of floating securities, such as Exchequer bills and India bonds, that Goldsmid, in spite of all his money, found it impossible to keep the price of the "omnium" up, and by the end of August it was at a discount of two per cent.

Goldsmid struggled desperately against these serried ranks of sellers—selling, selling, selling, ever selling the Funds. They hung about his agents; they hustled them on 'Change, they hooted at and guyed them. If his brokers opened their mouths to ask a price, that very moment there seemed to be a signal given, and the quotation appeared to be here a sixteenth, there an eighth, there a quarter, here a full half, below the last—always a little lower.

The struggle began to tell upon him. He became fitful, morose, depressed. The tell-tale lines of the face deepened. The eyes grew weary. Strange bursts of temper shook the man. Nor was it singular, when it was known that he was now losing money to the tune of something like £100,000 a day.

The whisper went round that the House of Goldsmid

*"Omnium" meant the various kinds of stock covering the National debt in which a loan was eventually absorbed, or, to make the matter more easily understood, a person purchasing a certain quantity of "omnium," purchased given proportions of the various descriptions of Government securities. In those days there were the three, four, five per cents., the Navy five's, India bonds, besides consols, &c.

The well-known figure of the banker was seen, one day, passing along Lombard Street.

was going, and the conspirators lost no opportunity of painting the situation as even blacker than it really was. In every way within their power they laboured to destroy the credit of his firm, and credit is one of those delicate things which will not stand much of this kind of business. But as yet Goldsmid held his head proudly enough, and honoured every demand upon him.

The first fortnight of that September, however, showed that the struggle was only beginning, and that the worst had yet to come. Delighted with their success, the band of plotters were incessant in their activity, and when they had brought the "omnium" down to a discount of four per cent. by the fourteenth of the month, Goldsmid for the first time realised that the fight was one to the death.

His losses now amounted, it was said quite openly—and the openness with which it was said was in itself the worst of all signs—to between one and two millions sterling.

It was at this very time that there occurred an incident which was trifling in its character, but which had the most marked effect upon Goldsmid himself and upon the whole Stock Exchange.

The well-known figure of the banker was seen, one

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day, passing along Lombard Street. It was noticed that his body was bent as if with fatigue, and that his whole appearance showed symptoms of cruel strain. His eyes were fixed, as if upon some object which he saw in front of him, and he turned neither to the right nor to the left in his steps. He seemed utterly absorbed.

Suddenly a bull, which had escaped from the hands of a butcher, rushed down the street, and before the banker could move out of its way it had knocked him down and trodden upon him. There were many who said that it was an evil omen. Amongst those who went to Goldsmid's assistance was Tom Perkins, the head-waiter of the "City of London Tavern." Tom had no idea that it was an omen, good or bad, but he saw the accident which had befallen his benefactor, and with the help of two others made haste to carry him into the inn, where, presently, Goldsmid revived.

When he came to himself, having been made somewhat dazed by what had happened, he kept murmuring to himself in a childish fashion, and Tom at first could make no sense out of his babblings. But after a while Goldsmid fully recovered, and demanded that he should be left alone. As Tom remained after the others, anxiously inquiring if there was anything he could do for him, Goldsmid said—

"Ah, my man, if I only could have seen how much there was behind what you told me a few weeks ago, how very different would be my case. But how could I tell? You may still, however, do me a great service. You told me that you overheard some men devising a plot against me. You never told me their names. Tell me now. Who was their leader?"

In the course of his daily avocations at the tavern, which was frequented by so many members of the Stock Exchange, Perkins had heard several rumours of how Goldsmid was being "hurt" in trying to dispose of the loan for which he had contracted with the Government. His sympathies were, of course, with Goldsmid.

"I am under the deepest obligation, sir, to you," said honest Tom, "and you have a right to ask me to do almost anything in return. It was Mr. Rosenthal, a relative of your own, if I mistake not, who appeared to be the chief speaker at the meeting of which I told you."

"Rosenthal! Joel!" exclaimed Goldsmid. "Ah, he is implacable. He has neither forgiven nor forgotten how I refused him the hand of my brother's daughter." And, muttering to himself, "Bad, bad, bad," insisted upon leaving the tavern at once.

But Rosenthal had yet one more card to play, one more deadly stroke to deliver, and that by far the most fatal of all.

On the Monday following the accident the market was in a state of semi-panic. Several failures of merchants of fairly high standing were announced. The "Bears" were bolder than ever, and the discount on "omnium" went down to seven per cent. Amongst those who were watching what was going on was a director of the East India Company. Rosenthal addressed him, as he knew him well.

"A word with you in private, if you please."

They moved aside into a quiet part of the street.

"I may be mistaken, sir," said Rosenthal, "but your Company was reported to have placed bonds to a large figure in the hands of Goldsmid and Co. to dispose of. Am I right?"

"Quite right," he replied. "I can see no harm in telling you that the firm has half a million of our bonds, for which they agreed to pay us a certain sum some time ago."

"There are sinister rumours afloat. It might be a matter of wisdom to call for that money at once—to-morrow might be too late."

"I am your debtor for the hint. I shall see about the matter at once."

That very day the half million in cash was called for by the East India Company. This got to be known, and many who had deposits with the Goldsmids demanded their immediate payment.

For all the rest of that terrible week Abraham Goldsmid stood like a lion at bay, but sick at heart, and with a dreadful fear that overwhelming disaster was coming upon him. "Omnium" declined as low as eight per cent., then ten, discount.

On the day when that took place, Goldsmid made a last effort. He even went so far as to send a message to his traitorous kinsman, Rosenthal — a proceeding which was as the bitterness of death to him. Whatever it was he asked for, the only reply he received was: "Your time has come. Remember what was written."

Remember what was written! "After all," the said to himself, "no man can escape his fate." A few hours later he was dead—dead, by his own act.

It made a great sensation, for Goldsmid had done many a kindly and even noble deed. When Rosenthal heard of it he shrugged his shoulders and said: "To every dog his day."

Goldsmid's losses were Rosenthal's gains. But the time came when a fate not very different from that of the man he had plotted so successfully against was his own, and, no doubt, there were not a few who were ready enough also to say: "To every dog his day."

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The Awakening.

A MONOLOGUE.

Oh, dear! I suppose I shall have to let it go! And how carefully I have treasured it! The gold in the setting is as bright now as it was when Arthur first slipped it on my finger, and stole the kiss that I could hardly (even if he had waited to ask for it), have refused. Three years ago! What a lot has happened in those three years! Then I was just a young girl; now, I feel an old woman. I was full of illusions then—only I didn't call them illusions. I don't think I really knew then what the word meant. Now I have almost forgotten that I ever had any, it seems so long since I lost them.

But, there, what is the good of thinking. It's getting late, and Florence must be back before Jack comes home or he'll be suspicious. Here it is, Florence; be very careful.

I feel horrid at parting with it; it seems somehow like giving away a part of one's self. But, then, what else was I to do? I can't ask Jack for any more money. When I asked him to pay Violette's bill, he made quite a scene about it—said I was horribly extravagant, and things "on 'Change" had been so bad lately, and he really didn't know whether we oughtn't to move into a cheaper house. That was only a week ago, and I really wouldn't dare to show him another bill so soon, and such a big one, too.

It can't really be a bit true about "on 'Change," I believe. A year ago Jack was quite different. Really I was much more extravagant then, and he never grumbled once. Only a year makes a lot of difference in a man, doesn't it, especially if he is your husband? I really believe Jack hardly cares for me a bit now. He's always out at the club, or kept late at the office, or something—especially something, I fancy. I believe we hardly spend one evening in a week together. And to think I might have married Arthur! Oh, what a fool I've been!

How well I remember that afternoon when Arthur brought me the ring. He said the stones in it were not half so bright as my eyes. Why doesn't Jack ever talk to me like that? But, then, Jack never did have much romance in his nature, and what little he had he seems to have lost now. Arthur was always different! There was caress in his voice, and the mere touch of his hand was a declaration of love. And I might have married him!

I wonder what Arthur is doing now? I've never seen him since. Perhaps he is dead; he never was very strong—not a bit like Jack; Jack's a regular horse; nothing ever seems to make *him* ill.

If there was anything else I could have sold I would never have let Arthur's ring go. But, there, I have nothing else so valuable. I remember how he told me that there were half a dozen people after that ring, and how he had only just managed to get it by outbidding them. It was frightfully extravagant of him, but, then, he loved me—ah—how he must have loved me! Jack would never dream of buying me a ring like that, and he's a great deal better off, whatever he chooses to say now, than poor Arthur ever was.

It's lucky Jack has never seen it; he would be sure to have asked embarrassing questions about it, and I am sure I don't know what I would have said. He nearly did see it that evening, too, when he came in suddenly as I was slipping it on and off my finger and watching the diamonds glitter in the firelight. How fortunate it was that I had just got into my frock for dinner, and how I trembled when Jack insisted on pinning in the roses at my breast. I thought his clumsy fingers would be sure to tumble across its hiding-place, and, indeed, once he actually touched it, but he never guessed what it was. He wondered why it was that I rushed upstairs for my handkerchief the moment we sat down to dinner, instead of sending Florence. But the minute I had to myself in my room was quite sufficient to dive down into my dress for the ring, and lock it up in its usual place.

Ten o'clock. What a time Florence is taking. Surely the shops aren't all shut! I thought those dreadful pawnbrokers were always open. I've always heard so. I wonder what I shall get for the ring—a hundred pounds at least, though, of course it's worth a great deal more than that. I know what I'll do—I'll pay the bill; that's—let me see, seventy-five pounds and then buy myself another ring with what's left. That will be like still having Arthur's ring—in a way—and I shan't feel quite so dreadful.

Ah, there's Florence at last! What a long time you have been! *Give me the money!* Three and sixpence! *What* do you say; 3s. 6d. for a ring like that? Eh—*paste*? My—er—er—you may go, Florence. Go! Don't you hear?

Think of it! That I should have been so deceived! *Me*, it's monstrous! That little wretch of an Arthur! I don't believe he ever cared for me at all. *Paste!* and all the lies he told me about it, too! Why, it's disgraceful—scandalous! And I—loved him! No, never! And yet—no, I am sure I didn't! Horrid—er—bother this pocket—where's my handkerchief? After all, what's the good of being a woman if one can't have a good cry sometimes? What's—what's—(sinks back into a chair and sobs passionately).

Why, it's past twelve! Jack said he would be home at twelve. I mustn't let him see I have been crying. And—yes, there's a key in the door now. It is Jack! I wonder if he will come upstairs or go into the smoking-room. I know I told him never to dare to come upstairs at this time, but I didn't really mean it. Listen—yes, he is coming upstairs; the dear old fellow; Oh, I am so glad! (Runs to the door and throws herself into her husband's arms.) Come and kiss me, Jack!

Grace Mann.

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PLAIN SPEAKING.

W. G.—Of the whole length of the Suez Canal, sixty-six miles are cuttings, fourteen were made by dredging through lakes and eight required no labour.

H. asks the following question: "I see that the word 'idiot' is derived from the Greek *idiotes*, a private person. Isn't this a trifle hard on the private person?" ———How is it? The Greek word (made up from *idios*, one's own) meant a man who looked after his own affairs only, in contradistinction to the *polites* or politician. In course of time, the man who took no interest in the affairs of the city (*polis*) was looked down upon; this new signification of *idiotes* apparently became accentuated, and now our word idiot means a person incapable of attending to anything—either his own affairs or other people's.

John M.—The Magna Charta is still preserved in the British Museum. It shows traces of age, but the seal and name of King John are still legible.

Mike Colan.—Cape Colony is divided into seventy-seven districts, and its dependencies into twenty-nine. The Legislative Council consists of twenty-three members, elected for seven years; the House of Assembly has seventy-nine members, elected for five years. All members of Parliament are entitled to a guinea a day for services, with 15s. extra if resident more than fifteen miles from Cape Town.

Florian has noticed the oily or slimy feeling of seaweed, and suggests that it might be used to calm the waves in a storm.———The floating beds of seaweed observed in mid-ocean are known to reduce the height of waves, like oil thrown upon the water; but it would be too large a commission for a ship to carry a supply for that purpose. A scientist has invented a thin cotton or silken net, properly oiled, which he thinks will act in the same way, and will not take up much room.

Miner.—The name "Klondyke" means absolutely nothing. It is most probably a corruption of the Indian name for the creek made so famous by its tributaries. The Indians name a creek from some characteristic; the water is so swift in this one that, in order to set their salmon traps, they have to use a hammer to drive in the stake to which they are fixed. They call it Troan Dik (Hammer Creek) in consequence.

G. M.—Nebuchadnezzar is said to have had a library—the first on record—in which the books were bricks engraved with cuneiform characters.

V. N. is curious to know who is the biggest farmer in England. Oddly enough, his name is Farmer. He is a neighbour of the Chancellor of the Exchequer in Wiltshire, and his holdings exceed 15,000 acres. He has at least one thousand cows and upwards of five thousand sheep.

Money.—No gold coinage existed in this country till the reign of Henry III.; silver and brass were the metals used prior to that. The notes used by the Bank of England cost just about one halfpenny apiece.

Lisse.—It seems strange, on first thoughts, to eat salt with oranges, but you are by no means the only person who does so. The Mexicans prefer the fruit seasoned in that way, and consider it more wholesome.

Major puts this question: "It is calculated that it requires eight times the force to move a man's body upstairs that it does to move it along on the level. It must require much less to move it downstairs. Do you know the figures?" ——— Our statistical editor is away just now, but from information received from a young man who had a similar experiment tried upon him after a brief interview with his best girl's parent, he is of opinion that the force used to move his body downstairs was twenty horse-power. He thinks, however, half that force would have been sufficient.

T. Y.—Some idea of the mixed character of the population of Austria-Hungary may be obtained from the fact that twelve languages are spoken in the army.

Valiant is anxious to possess a relic of one of our national heroes; an autograph or any similar souvenir is not good enough for him. He would like a sword. ———Such a relic fetches a high price when offered for sale, which, as you may guess, is very seldom. About four years ago the sword carried by General Wolfe at the capture of Quebec was for sale. It was in the possession of a Canadian gentleman for many years; he gave it to Major Dunn, of the 100th Regiment, a Crimean hero. Then it passed into the hands of a gentleman in the War Office, whose son put it up for sale.

W. J. T. wishes to know in which country the total population increases most rapidly; he thinks it is Germany. ———If we take the statistics for a century, we find that Russia has the most rapidly increasing population. The growth during the past century has been almost 1,000,000 annually.

Shipmate.—There are more shipwrecks in the Baltic Sea than in any other place in the world. The average is one wreck a day throughout the year.

Farmer.—Waste or desert lands are being re-claimed everywhere. In Eastern Australia, for instance, there is a region which was a sandy desert thirty years ago, but in which 100,000,000 sheep now find sustenance.

A. C. writes in this fashion: "I have heard it stated that there is gold in the bricks used in building dwelling houses. I should like to know how much, because it might pay me to pull down my old house and build a new and better one with the gold obtained from the bricks."——— You haven't a Klondyke so near home as that, A. C. The common red clay of which bricks are made contains gold in the proportion of about one shillingsworth to the ton. Estimating that there are 5,000,000 tons of brick in London houses, we see that there is £250,000 of gold stored up in the many miles of streets which go to make up the Metropolis.

Light B.—Yes, the bugle upon which was sounded the order for the charge of the Light Brigade is still in existence. The bugle, with medals and testimonials belonging to its owner, was sold quite recently by auction, the lot fetched 750 guineas.

Garden.—It is estimated that the sunflower plant draws from the soil and exhales twelve ounces of water in as many hours.

L. T. writes: "We have a blind horse. I have watched it grazing, and am surprised that it does not eat something that would kill it or injure it. I suppose it is instinct?"——— Horses are said to be guided entirely by the nostrils in the selection of food; hence blind horses are not more liable than their brethren to make mistakes in their diet.

Tourist.—The annual influx of visitors in the Riviera is calculated at 270,000. One third of this number is British, another third is French, and the remaining third is made up of Americans, Germans, Russians, and other nationalities. These visitors spend something like £8,000,000.

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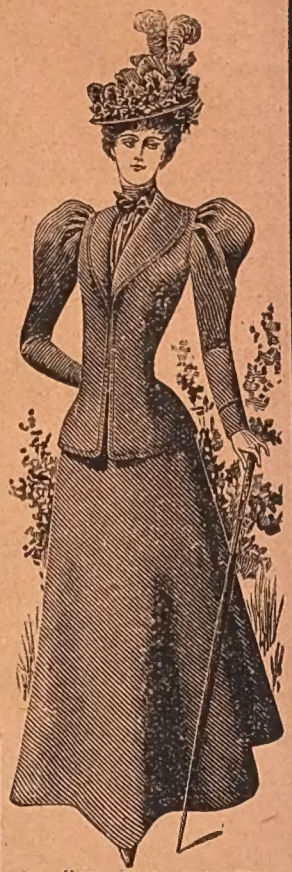

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